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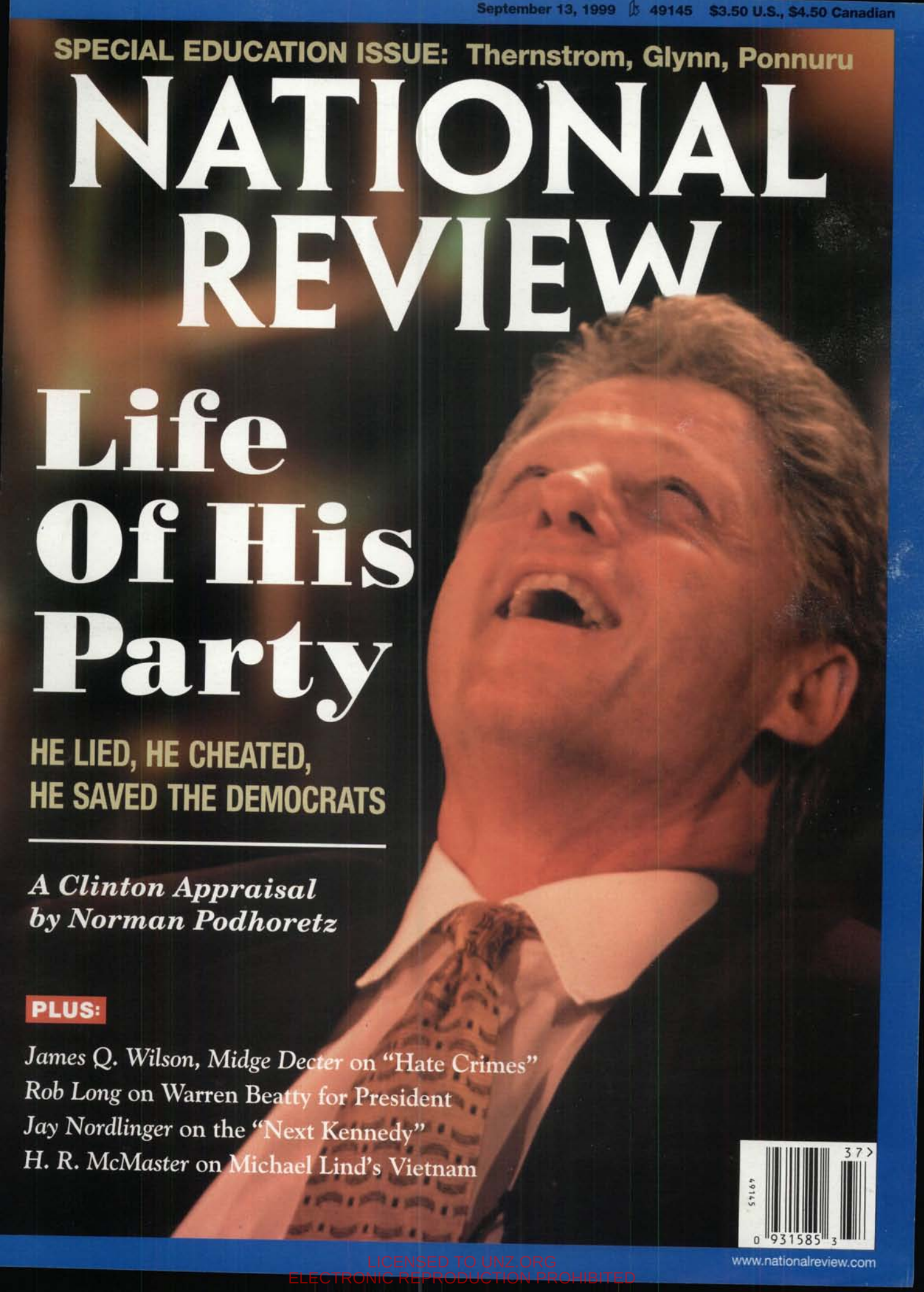

Life Of His Party

HE LIED, HE CHEATED, HE SAVED THE DEMOCRATS

A Clinton Appraisal by Norman Podhoretz

PLUS:

James Q. Wilson, Midge Decter on "Hate Crimes"
Rob Long on Warren Beatty for President
Jay Nordlinger on the "Next Kennedy"
H. R. McMaster on Michael Lind's Vietnam

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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■ LETTERS ■

NO PALEOLIBERALS HERE

Ramesh Ponnuru's "Tax and Spin" (August 30) brands me and the organization I direct as "paleoliberals." Yet we favor paying down debt over either tax cuts or new spending, believe Social Security reform should include benefit reductions, favor means-testing the Medicare premium, and support extending the spending caps beyond 2002. Last year, when some congressional Democrats pushed to make school breakfasts free at all income levels, it wasn't the Heritage Foundation or the Cato Institute that led the opposition, but the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. How's that paleoliberal?

The article portrays us as fanatically opposed to tax cuts. Not so. Tax cuts could be in order when a significant surplus outside Social Security materializes or when the economy turns downward. But neither has happened yet, and congressional action on appropriations bills signals a non–Social Security deficit next year.

Several specific critiques of our views on tax cuts are incorrect or caricatures. But the article is right in one respect: I'm chagrined to note that, owing to a late-night editing error on my part, a recent Center analysis mistakenly used the word "families" instead of "households." We've now corrected it.

Robert Greenstein
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
Washington, D.C.

THE BUSINESS RESPONSE

"Board Games" by Danielle Dunne Wilcox and Chester E. Finn Jr. (Aug. 9) erroneously suggests that because the nation's two largest teachers' unions are National Board for Professional Teaching Standards supporters, all other supporters, including the business community, must be tied to the unions' positions on licensing standards, continuing education, and alternative teacher-certification programs. This is nonsense.

NBPTS supporters include organizations that are the traditional collective-bargaining opponents of the teachers' unions, as well as bipartisan associations of elected public officials whose Republican members are frequently at odds with the unions' agendas. The Business Coalition for Education Reform supports both alternative licensing programs and the NBPTS.

Standards and assessments are the core of National Board Certification. The focus is on learning for both students and teachers. Teachers must know their subject matter. They must meet the National Board's standards through assessments which encourage research-based practice that has a positive effect on student learning. The quality of student work submitted by the certification applicant is at the heart of this process.

We know there's a connection between teacher quality and student achievement. The NBPTS has garnered support from the business community because it is an organization that recognizes and encourages experienced classroom teachers who voluntarily demonstrate knowledge of their subject field and accomplished teaching practices.

Edward B. Rust Jr.
Chairman & CEO
State Farm Insurance Companies
Bloomington, Ill.

SIGNS OF HOPE

Reading David Pryce-Jones is always a pleasure, and "Twilight of the Ayatollahs" (Aug. 30) was a double happiness, because it is so informative and offers reason for hope. The issue of Palestine has been a source of rage, and therefore of strength, for Islamic radicals. Terrorists have always feared a peace agreement because they know that an independent Palestine can exist only with Israel, not against it. When Yasser Arafat accepted the idea of a Palestine that would live in peace with Israel, he betrayed the cause of those whose top priority is the destruction of Israel.

President Mohammed Khatami of Iran, Pryce-Jones informs us, "projects himself as a moderate and a reformer." Khatami, however, has not dared suggest that Iran live in peace with Israel. Although Iran shares no border and has no quarrel with Israel, Iran supports groups like Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad, which are opposed to the very idea of peace. If Khatami wants a stable Iran, he must speak against those who use anti-Zionism as a tool to perpetuate fanaticism.

George Jochnowitz
Staten Island, N.Y.

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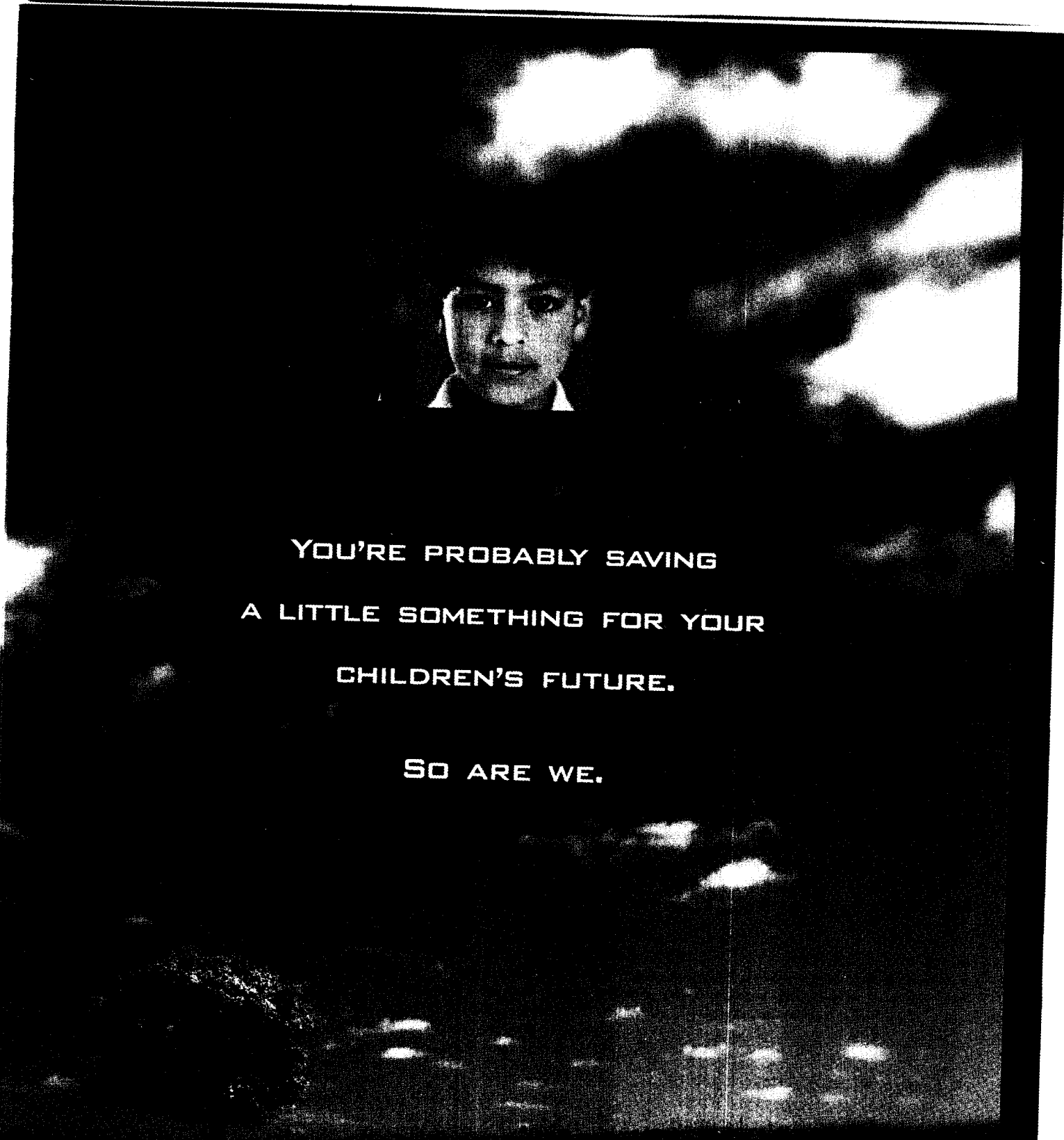

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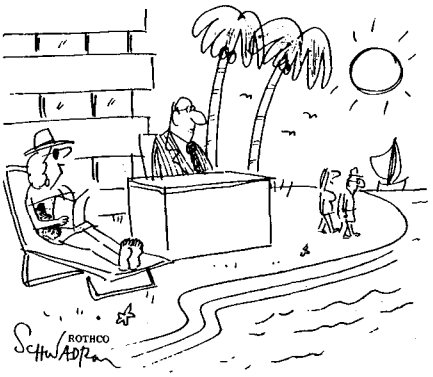
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Clinton**, on meeting **Hillary** at Yale Law School: "She was an interesting, compelling-looking woman, so I followed her out of class. . . . I got right behind her and I said, 'No, this is nothing but trouble.' . . . And then I kind of stalked her around the law school for two or three weeks." . . . In wake of First Lady linking husband's infidelity to childhood relationship with mother and grandmother, Fox News poll asks who is to blame for **Monica Lewinsky** scandal: 90 percent say Clinton, 1 percent say Clinton's mother and grandmother. . . . Only 30 percent say Hillary believes own charge of "vast right-wing conspiracy" against president.

■ Eldest second daughter **Karenna Gore Schiff** tells *New Woman* magazine, "When I was a kid, *Mighty Mouse* was a popular cartoon, and my mother would say, 'Now the girl mouse is going to get rescued by **Mighty Mouse**. And I don't like the show for that reason. You should just realize that the girl mouse could get herself out of that situation on her own.'" . . . **Bill Bradley** in August: "I think this is a time when it's possible to raise too much money." But in 1990 N.J. Senate race, Bradley refused offer by challenger **Christine Todd Whitman** to cap campaign spending at $3 million per candidate. . . . Following disclosure that a state college in Stratham, N.H., paid $5,000 to rent an air conditioner to keep a room cool for Vice President **Al Gore**, Gov. **Jeanne Shaheen** (D.) orders state agencies to make sure presidential campaigns reimburse them for expenses.

■ **George W. Bush** distances himself from former Calif. governor **Pete Wilson**, despite reports Wilson is ready to help campaign, owing to fears Wilson's involvement would hurt Bush among Hispanic voters. . . . Bush buys 1,500-acre cattle ranch near Crawford, Tex., fueling speculation it will become "Western White House." . . . **Lamar Alexander** abandons presidential race, does not endorse another candidate. . . . Former Alexander supporter Sen. **Fred Thompson** (Tenn.) endorses Sen. **John McCain** (Ariz.) . . . McCain calls for permanent ban on Internet sales taxes. . . . N.Y. mayor **Rudy Giuliani** endorses Bush. . . . Sen. **Bob Smith** (I., N.H.) says he won't seek U.S. Taxpayers Party nomination after bolting GOP, appears ready to abandon any White House bid to care for ailing wife.

■ Following tax-cut vote, Fox News poll shows Republicans leading Democrats in generic ballot, 48 to 35 percent, up from 43 to 38 percent lead in June. . . . House Speaker **Denny Hastert** says term limits are dead: "We haven't been able to pass [term limits] the last four years. I don't think the support is there in Congress now. . . . I don't think we'll see this again in the near future." . . . Oregon Republicans refuse to hold traditional four-year gathering at Seaside, after convention-center commission refuses to let



"It's your first vacation in 20 years. Relax, Henry, you'll get the gist of it."

Rose City Gun Show use facility. . . . Gov. **John Engler** (R., Mich.) tells *Detroit Free Press* he has "never supported [school] vouchers" while in office, refuses to sign petition to put school-choice measure on 2000 ballot. Engler aides say initiative polls poorly and would hurt reelection hopes of Sen. **Spencer Abraham** (R.) by boosting Democratic turnout. . . . **Jim Bradley**, viewed as frontrunner in Salt Lake City mayoral race, proposes gouging tourists during 2002 Winter Olympics: "We have to raise the car-rental tax as high as we can possibly do it—even shamelessly high—to generate revenue. . . . We have to look at opportunities like that to just screw 'em."

■ Atlanta mayor **Bill Campbell** says he will "fight to the death" defending city's set-aside requirement against lawsuit by Southeastern Legal Foundation. . . . El Cenizo, Tex., declares itself "safe haven" for illegal aliens, promises to fire any city worker who cooperates with Border Patrol, and makes Spanish the town's official language. . . . Denver zoning administration orders woman to quit hosting Bible-study group in home: "Prayer meetings are held more than once a month in the single-unit dwelling . . . in violation of the cited section," reads cease-and-desist order. . . . Nearly 3 percent of adult population is in prison or under police supervision, says Bureau of Justice Statistics. . . . Peregrine falcon removed from endangered-species list.

■ Calling it "a moral obligation and strategic imperative," 22 signatories, including **William F. Buckley Jr.** and **William Kristol**, endorse Project for the New American Century-Heritage Foundation statement urging Clinton administration to "declare unambiguously that it will come to Taiwan's defense in the event of an attack or a blockade. ". . . Beijing blocks visit by **Pope John Paul II** to Hong Kong on Asian tour this fall because Vatican maintains ties with Taiwan. . . . Japanese cabinet approves research for antiballistic missile defense system to be run jointly with U.S. . . . Former Polish president **Lech Walesa** says he will run again. . . . Peruvian president **Alberto Fujimori** seeks draft to confront potential threat from leftist rebels in Colombia. . . . Saudi businessman **Saleh Idris** sues U.S. for damage done to pharmaceutical plant in Sudan last year by cruise missile, says he never supplied chemicals for nerve gas to **Osama bin Laden**. . . . After blistering criticism, South Africa's Truth Commission concedes it failed to give full and balanced account of abuses under apartheid. . . . In Bucharest auction, black Buick given by President **Nixon** to late Communist ruler **Nicolae Ceausescu** fetches $15,000.

■ **Sammy "The Bull" Gravano**, Mafia turncoat, in *Vanity Fair*: "Gun control? It's the best thing you can do for crooks and gangsters. I want you to have nothing. If I'm a bad guy, I'm always gonna have a gun. Safety locks? You will pull the trigger with a lock on, and I'll pull the trigger. We'll see who wins." **NR**

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THE WEEK

■ Perhaps Gov. Bush could take a leaf from Gov. Clinton in early 1992 and admit to causing pain in his nose.

■ Elizabeth Dole likes to refer to her straw-poll finish as "almost second." Yes, and Mrs. Dole—whose signature issue is declaring drugs "not cool"—is almost a serious presidential candidate. She finished closer to fourth than she did to second, but even this was higher than she deserved. Just a day after her surprise finish prompted a collective "Like, ohmygosh!" from sorority girls all over Iowa, Mrs. Dole appeared on *Meet the Press* to evade questions about U.S. policy toward Mexico, gays in the Boy Scouts, and teaching evolution in the schools. The next day she fumbled a question on Medicaid funding of abortion. "I just want to be sure exactly what the current situation is," she explained with typical aplomb. "Let's don't pursue that further now, because I need to check that." Mrs. Dole's campaign is devoted to the proposition that a woman can do anything as well as a man. Unfortunately for Mrs. Dole, one thing at least some men do is take positions on issues.

■ Pro-lifers are treating John McCain unfairly, though it is partly his own fault. In two interviews, McCain appeared to throw away his 16-year pro-life voting record by saying he would not support the repeal of *Roe* v. *Wade* because it would lead to back-alley abortions. It is clear that McCain "misspoke": Aides have assured that he realizes that overturning *Roe* would not ban abortion but merely return the issue to the states and Congress. What McCain meant to say, apparently, is that America is not ready for a ban and that progress toward one will have to be incremental. When George W. Bush made the same points, with similar clumsiness, in March, the National Right to Life Committee gave him a pass. But the group attacked McCain in vituperative terms, perhaps reflecting its deep opposition to his misguided campaign-finance bill. In a letter to the NRLC, McCain responded, "I have always believed in the importance of the repeal of *Roe* vs. *Wade*, and as President, I would work toward its repeal" (a promise Bush, by the way, has not made). Case closed. But is it too much to ask that Republicans explain their positions on abortion to themselves before they give interviews?

■ Lamar Alexander exited the presidential race, unable to compete with Bush for money, attention, moderately conservative voters, or the support of the party establishment. He is a talented and capable politician in an age when such qualities are undervalued, especially on the right. He was hobbled, also, by campaign-finance restrictions that force candidates to pay for their own campaigns out of pocket or to raise money in $1,000 increments—the equivalent of filling a bathtub with a spoon. Alexander's objections to these restrictions should not be dismissed as opportunistic, since he first voiced them right after his well-financed 1996 campaign. His example should point toward the best campaign-finance reform of all: repealing the last round of reforms.

■ Democratic presidential candidate Bill Bradley has taken his race act to Al Sharpton, appearing with him at his New York headquarters. He has thus joined hands with one of the most reprehensible demagogues and race-baiters in the country (we are speaking of Bradley joining hands with Sharpton, in case you were wondering). Now, we certainly understand the exigencies of practical politics: Sometimes even a relatively blameless politician has to cavort with the impure. But Sharpton is something else. He is the master hoaxer of the Tawana Brawley case. He is an inciter to murder, as in the Freddie's Fashion Mart case. He is the kind of ranter who brands his opponents not only racist, but Hitlerian and evil. Sharpton is a menace to the harmony of society. Bradley, by kissing his ring, has shown a contempt for those Americans, both black and white, who are truly interested in racial reconciliation. Nothing has so put the lie to Bradley's self-portrait as a progressive and healer as this.

■ If an actor named Ronald Reagan could win the presidency, why not Warren Beatty? Well, for starters, Reagan was a successful two-term governor of a large state and had serious ideas about the government and the world. Not Beatty. He fantasizes that he will restore the Democratic party of FDR, Truman, et al. But his liberalism on moral and cultural issues—including support for the Black Panthers and sexual license as expressions of black authenticity—would have been repellent to all of those men. His prime mission as a candidate, he tells us in the *New York Times*, is "to arrest our slide from democracy to plutocracy" through "COMPLETE PUBLIC FINANCING OF ALL FEDERAL CAMPAIGNS" (his capitals). Beyond that, he tells us nothing of his plans, concluding, "Stay tuned. We'll be back after this message." If the Left has been marginalized in American politics, as Beatty complains, it is because of just such terminal self-indulgence.

■ Independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr intends to resign before the year is out. Over five years he has accumulated a long list of accomplishments. He flushed away some crooks in Arkansas and the Justice Department. He conducted himself with diligence and dignity, despite a media and White House

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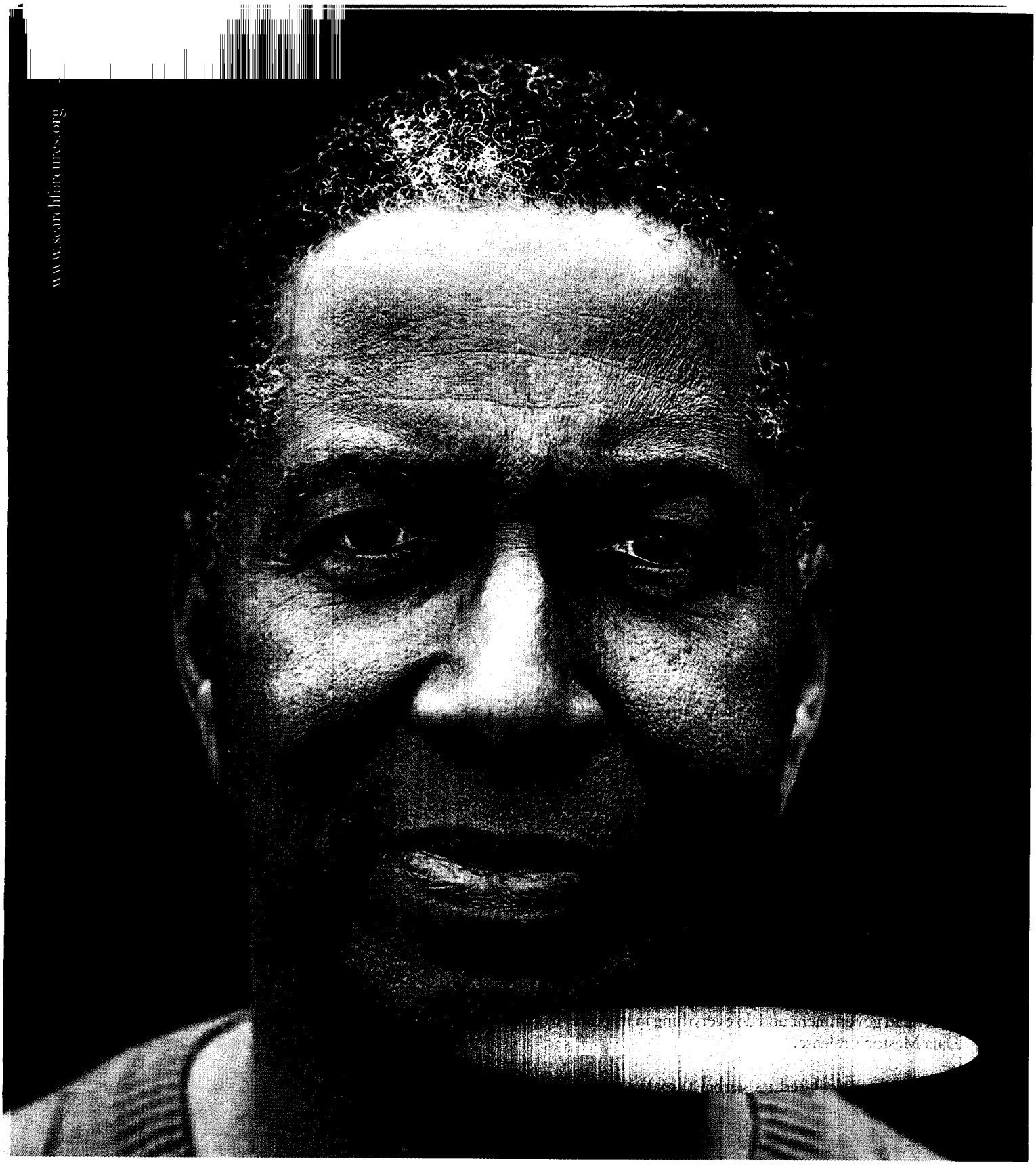

It's the face of Jim Williams. A father and a pilot, he has been in remission from prostate cancer for over eight years. As someone who did two combat tours in Vietnam, he knows war. Still, he considers prostate cancer his ultimate battle. Jim relies on new medicines from America's pharmaceutical companies. They're a major reason why he's in remission. Even though more people are surviving prostate cancer than ever before, pharmaceutical company researchers won't give up until there is a cure. Their relentless search allows people like Jim to face a future filled with hope.

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jihad against him. Most important, he gave the House the material to do its duty in impeaching President Belial ("false he was and hollow; though his Tongue Dropt Manna"). On the other hand, he took on a job, a constitutional monstrosity, that should not exist, and suffered from its weightlessness. Both a political and a prosecutorial novice, he paced himself badly. In the end, he failed: The president, his wife, and his tart all got away, with further career opportunities. Ken Starr, who once hoped to serve on the Supreme Court, was the main victim of the Starr years. History should not judge him harshly: He faced a strong opponent, and a weak citizenry.

■ Martin Peretz, owner of *The New Republic*, writes this encomium to Al Gore: "[He is] an honest person . . . a deeply literate one . . . When Gore is truly grave, he is not dull . . . he is at his most passionate and his most learned. Yes, I mean learned precisely in the way that no president since Wilson and Hoover has been. . . . The first big book in his life was the King James Version of the Bible . . . it is still a treasure for Gore, and it is one reason why he puzzles over ultimate questions. . . . He dares to wrestle also with concrete answers. No one in our public life is quite like him. He is secure in the earliest beliefs of our civilization and ventures confidently into the latest discoveries of that civilization. He is at home alike in faith and with science." Not since Erasmus, we are supposed to believe, did such a principled polymath bestride this narrow earth. It's time for *The New Republic* to revive its "Suck-up Watch" feature: Mr. Peretz, you may already have won.

■ The Communist government in Beijing is holding an American who had traveled to China in order to pursue his special concern: the rights of Tibetans. The American, Daja Meston, now lies in a hospital, suffering from spinal damage and broken bones. The Chinese government says that he fell from a third-floor window while trying to escape. Maybe he did. Maybe he didn't. Maybe it's another case of Communist brutes acting like Communist brutes. In either case, Mr. Meston is a long way from home, immobilized, and in the custody of a regime he rightly despises and opposes. The Clinton administration likes to think of itself as China's "strategic partner." It should instead think of itself as the American government and do everything in its power to gain Daja Meston's release.

■ China has escalated its verbal threats against Taiwan, hinting at some form of military "punishment" of the island. The language in the official *Global Times* was ugly: China "has already finished all preparations for any use of force against Taiwan. The Chinese are never afraid of warfare or of difficult wars." As for the possibility of U.S. intervention, "China's neutron bombs are more than enough to handle aircraft carriers." This may be mere bluster, but our urgent necessity is to warn the Chinese off. Chinese diplomats in Washington are trying to gauge probable U.S. reaction to various military moves. The last thing those diplomats need to hear is Clintonite patter about "strategic ambiguity."

■ Burnt out under Hitler, and abandoned ever since, the restored Reichstag, or German parliament, is open again for business in Berlin. The first of some 10,000 German parliamentarians and officials are relocating there from Bonn, the postwar capital. On arrival, they are being presented with teddy bears to make them feel at home. A little soothing sentimentality seems in order, because they are in fact taking over where other Germans before them left off. The Finance Ministry, for instance, is to be in Hermann Goering's Reich Aviation Ministry. The Labor Ministry will move into Joseph Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry. Joschka Fischer and the Foreign Ministry occupy the Reichsbank, where the gold stripped from the teeth of concentration-camp victims was stored. Hitler himself approved the design of the building, and during the Cold War it was used as headquarters of the East German Communist Party. Never mind, says Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder: "Nobody much bears these things in mind now," not even him. He says, "I also can't imagine that Joschka Fischer will sit every day in his office remembering Hjalmar Schacht, Hitler's banker, with a sigh." Ach, Bonn was such a quiet little town, with Beethoven's house to show.

■ The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church decided to enter into full communion. What will it mean, apart from a lot of Swedes joining country clubs? For decades, Protestant churches in this country have been pursuing an ecumenical agenda. Some of the proposed ends—efficiency in good works (through joining forces) and healing arbitrary divisions (caused by accidents of national origin)—are admirable. But often the impulse overlooks serious differences about faith and authority. American Lutherans elect their bishops for limited terms; Episcopalians believe theirs form an apostolic succession. Do churches become willing to paper over such matters only when they become less serious?

■ The novel *The Coming Storm* describes a sexual relationship between a 15-year-old boy and his prep-school teacher, a 25-year-old man. Reviewing it for the *Washington Post*, Dennis Drabelle writes, "Paul Russell conjures up a world in which [this] affair . . . is troublesome not because it corrupts anybody (it doesn't) but because it is apt to be stereotyped, not least by the legal system that makes it a crime. Without preaching, Russell persuades the reader (or at least, I would think, most readers who are open-minded enough to pick up a book like this in the first place) that, in and of itself, the sexual relationship between Noah and Tracy is not only harmful to neither but a boon to the precocious junior partner, who becomes a better, more engaged student after the affair gets underway." A few years ago, Mary Eberstadt coined the term "pedophilia chic" to refer to a new frontier in artistic attempts to shock the public. But the *Post*'s pro-pedophilia review of a pro-pedophilia book has not only failed to shock, it has inspired no comment from anyone. Have we already passed from pedophilia chic to pedophilia ho-hum?

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■ Theodore Kaczynski, as the world knows, is a writer. He once wrote a long and deranged manifesto published in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Why did the papers run it? Because Kaczynski, the Unabomber, warned that he would kill again if they didn't. Now he is behind bars. But he is still writing, and he recently composed what news accounts call a "parable," to be published by students at the State University of New York, Binghamton. This parable, we learn, is, like the earlier manifesto, about the "ills of modern society." Here is one, surely: that the students at Binghamton should give a forum to a serial killer who should be accorded only the oblivion of his cell.

■ Authorities at Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center in Joliet, Ill., were shocked to discover racist graffiti scrawled in several bathrooms. They were even more shocked when Sister Dorothy Toman, a Franciscan nun and a chaplain at the hospital, confessed that she had written the hateful messages. According to police, Sr. Toman said she "wanted to see how the hospital would react." This is unsurprising. The sister's "test" recalls dozens of similarly staged "crimes" on college campuses every year (see Jon Sanders, "Hoax Crimes," Sept. 14, 1998). She did not have to wait long for an answer to her question about how the hospital would react: Officials there, who had offered a $5,000 reward for the identification of the culprit, fired her immediately after she confessed, and she now faces up to a year in jail for defacing property. We hope Sr. Toman's curiosity has been satisfied.

■ The sculptor Frederick Hart, who died on August 13, was one of America's most prominent artists. Born in Atlanta in 1943, he was a stone carver at Washington's National Cathedral when, in 1971, he entered a competition to design the west façade of the cathedral. He won the competition and designed the enthralling sculpture of the Creation called *Ex Nihilo*. After this triumph, the commissions came with regularity—*Three Soldiers* for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; a statue of Jimmy Carter for the state capitol in Hart's native city; the statue of a slain Colombian statesman for Bogotá's presidential palace. Our age has not been a generous one for creators of public beauty in the grand manner; Hart overcame the handicap of an unpropitious culture to enjoy a highly successful career. Future ages, moreover, will bestow even more honor on this great artist. Go to the National Cathedral, and *si monumentum requiris, circumspice*. R.I.P.

■ Harold Henry "Pee Wee" Reese of the Brooklyn Dodgers, who died at 81, may have been the best shortstop of his time, at least the equal of Marty "Slats"/"Octopus" Marion of Cleveland and Phil "Scooter" Rizzuto of the Yankees. With Reese, the Dodgers won seven National League pennants. He was a superb fielder. He was a nine-time All Star and exceeded 2,000 hits. He was notably dangerous with men on base and was himself a dangerous base-runner. Wearing the number 1, he was the unofficial captain of the team. In 1947, when Jackie Robinson was being harassed by the crowd and by the opposing bench, Reese nobly walked to his side and put his arm on his teammate's shoulder. There is a man to remember.

■ Headline of the month: "HATE MAY HAVE TRIGGERED FATAL BARRACKS BEATING" (*Washington Post*, August 11, page A1).

POLITICS AND POLICY

Bush & the Drug Wars

"ONE of the interesting questions facing baby boomers," said George W. Bush in a recent appearance, "is, Have we grown up? Are we willing to share the wisdom of past mistakes? I think a baby-boomer parent ought to say, 'I have learned from the mistakes I may or may not have made, and I'd like to share some wisdom with you and that is—don't do drugs.'"

That is one piece of wisdom worth sharing. But there are other pieces, as Gov. Bush has found. One, relevant to baby-boomer politicians, is to calculate realistically what can and can't be concealed in the modern media culture, and have the courage to respond accordingly. Another piece of wisdom, relevant to all of us, is to take an unsentimental look at the war on drugs, and the hypocrisies and inequities it engenders.

America is still a Puritan country, as the drug war shows. Drug dealers and habitual offenders are punished zealously; at the margins, the drug war becomes a shooting war, in Panama (under President Bush) and possibly Colombia (under President Clinton). Cigarettes and even the Budweiser frogs are assailed by legions of do-good busybodies. At the same time, Americans determinedly pursue happiness, in often imprudent or self-destructive ways. Doctors prescribe legal painkillers like candy, while millions of young people find it easy to score pot and cocaine. Some of them later get into politics.

Gov. Bush is ill positioned to expect mercy or indifference on the question of did-he-or-didn't-he. He is rightly proud of being a law-and-order governor, but part of that achievement comes

TOGETHER AGAIN

Al tried to separate himself
From Big Bad Bill, but like an elf
Accustomed to the company
Of Santa, tarting up a tree,
He's back with Bill, though several scenes
Could use new jokes and new routines.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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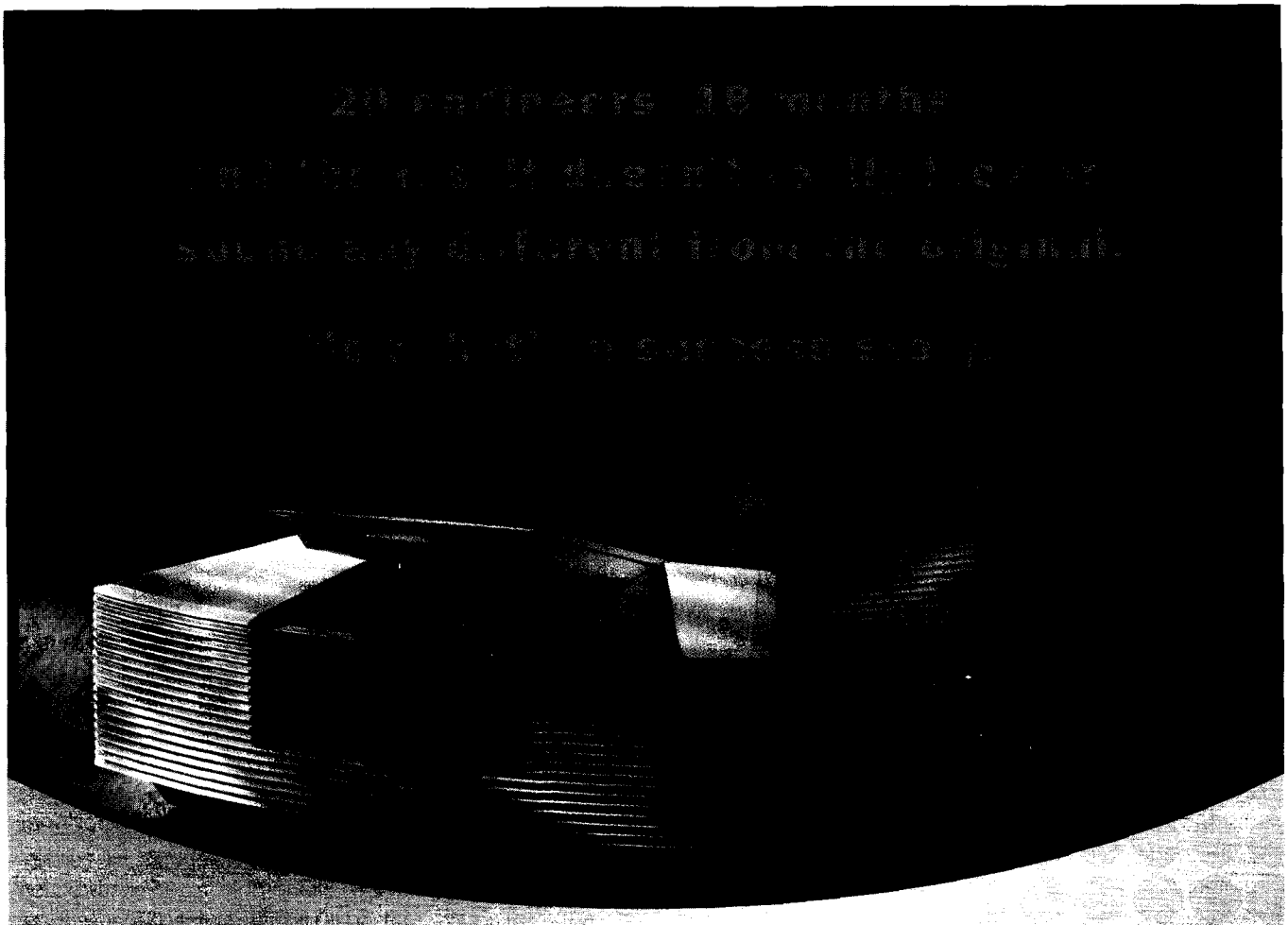

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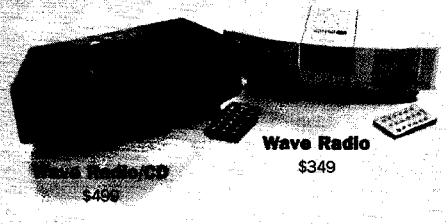

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from prosecuting the drug laws zealously. About 10 percent of the state's prison population is being held on cocaine-related charges. These are mostly multiple offenders and dealers, though Bush backed a law that would allow jail for first-time offenders. Arrests for possession are up. Even if a convicted offender only served probation, he would have a record. If George W. Bush had an arrest record, there would be no Bush campaign to damage.

Nor can Gov. Bush take refuge in the complaint that Gov. Clinton got a free pass on this issue when he first ran for president. (Clinton was friends with Dan Lasater, a drug dealer, and managed to persuade starry-eyed reporters like Joe Klein that

■ THE STRAW POLL ■

Letdown Palace

Ames, Iowa

DOZENS of motorcycles gleam in the sunlight outside the Ames, Iowa, straw poll; bearded biker guys in leather mill about, amused at their own presence at a generally prim Republican event. "I'm just here to look at women," one avows. Actually, they are all here as part of a Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell-led demonstration in behalf of George W. Bush, who is so dominant that he has apparently inherited even the Morrie Taylor vote (Taylor, the lark GOP candidate in 1996, imported motorcyclists to the 1995 straw poll, drenching them all day in Miller Genuine Draft).

A black pickup truck rests in the middle of the bikes, and soon enough Bush arrives to address the crowd from the back, like Yeltsin on his tank. As W. makes his way to the truck, he is mobbed, and right at home with the great unwashed (literally) who shake his hand and ask for autographs and pictures. He practically kisses some of the roughs, greeting them as warmly as if they were old drinking buddies. Bush, wearing a dark blue casual shirt, his face tanned and a little craggy—Marlboro Man-ish—looks pretty tough himself, the product of gritty Midland, Texas, rather than his dad's genteel Greenwich, Conn.

The crowd loves him, and this—along with the money and the polls—is one of W.'s chief strengths: He's the candidate of the rope line. Take his mugging for the cameras, his cocky, intense gaze as you will—refreshing self-assurance or insufferable bully-boy arrogance—but it gives off that frisson that is almost indispensable for a successful presidential candidate. Women practically jump up and down after getting his autograph.

His speaking style is something else altogether. From the back of the pickup, Bush gives one of his several impromptu talks that day, all of which boil down to: "Thanks for coming, be sure to vote." Except this time W. includes a special plug for "the freedom of individuals to make choices in their lives," a libertarian sentiment no doubt prompted by the fact that most of his listeners oppose mandatory-helmet laws.

Before speaking from the truck, W. sees an aide standing in the crowd, gives his usual hotshot gesture of recognition, and asks *sotto voce*, "How many we got?"

The aide, all confidence and cool, barely bats an eyelash: "11 to 13," he says, referring to what would be an astonishing 11,000–13,000 straw-poll voters. "Is that real?" W. asks.

Well, it wasn't. He got about half that number, clocking in at 31 percent of the vote. A campaign this smug would be headed for a fall, if it weren't for its weak opponents. Second-place candidate Steve Forbes continues to suffer from an operation that is unimaginative at best, ham-handed at worst.

The Forbes campaign might have guessed that the press would want to dismiss his strong showing as the product of ready cash. But the campaign still erected a tent city in Ames worthy of Gatsby in East Egg. "It's the prettiest tent," one for-hire entertainer boasted from the Forbes stage. "What other tent has French doors?" Then there was the now infamous balloon drop *before* his speech, which, because the crowd popped the balloons, drowned out his talk. "It's like he's speaking from inside a microwave oven with a bag of Newman's Own," quipped a delighted Al Franken.

The most reliable applause lines at Ames were attacks on the tawdriness of the Clinton administration and vows to restore dignity to the Oval Office. Bush is the beneficiary of what amounts to a double-edged GOP loathing and envy of Clinton; Republicans want to beat the president and his designated successor, but also want someone who can play the Dick Morris politics of the 1990s just as adroitly as Clinton. Bush seems to fill the bill on both counts. He certainly isn't vulnerable to an insurrection based on issues, simply because there seem to be no hot conservative issues at the moment. Dan Quayle touted his 30 percent across-the-board tax cut, then bashed HMOs—silence from the crowd for tax cuts, applause for the attack on managed care. And this, mind you, was a *Republican* audience.

Bush repeated his standard stump speech during the afternoon program, a talk that has worn very thin. There was little enthusiasm for him in the hall, partly because his campaign hadn't concentrated on sitting his supporters down. Instead they were all outside, about to be entertained by the Latino singer Emilio, whose name appeared on "Bush-Emilio" signs in the Bush tent (as long as it isn't "Bush-Dole" . . .). So, here was the frontrunner for the party's nomination, on the cusp of a solid victory in the first major test of the campaign season, and there was a whiff of a letdown in the air.

Republicans can only hope it isn't a foretaste of March 2000, by which time the "inevitable" will be cold reality.

—RICHARD LOWRY

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all the onus of hard-drug use lay on his scapegrace half brother, Roger.) Bill Clinton is a Democrat; different rules apply. Joe Klein knows that; so should George W.

An honest and intelligent baby-boomer is Gov. Gary E. Johnson of New Mexico. The two-term Republican admitted, during his first race, that he had smoked pot in college and tried cocaine. "I would like to see a discussion" on drug policy, he now says. "What might evolve is that we get our feet wet, so that we could learn how to legalize or decriminalize." Where could such a discussion start? Maybe here: 1) Decriminalize marijuana, a drug which, however foolish it may be to indulge in it, has never caused a death from an overdose. 2) Sell cocaine at cost to registered addicts through government stores. The electorate might not endorse such proposals. But it would be more edified than by melodramas of secret sin and exposure.

NATIONAL SECURITY

The Spy Mess

THE backlash to the Chinese spy scandal is in full flower. The former head of counterintelligence at Los Alamos, Robert S. Vrooman, told the *Washington Post* that not only is suspected spy Wen Ho Lee innocent, he is the victim of racist scapegoating, the high-tech equivalent of Driving While Black: Call it Researching While Asian. (Bear in mind that Vrooman, who has been humiliated, has an interest in minimizing security lapses that occurred on his watch.) Meanwhile, Notra Trulock, the Energy Department security official who a few months ago was a hero for breaking the spy scandal, has resigned from the department, accused of targeting Lee unfairly. The idea that China spied at all—instead of picking up information from the Internet or other open sources—is now in doubt, making the whole fuss seem a creation of the fevered imagination of a few paranoid white males.

But not so fast. Wen Ho Lee may or may not be guilty of passing to the Chinese design information for the W-88, America's most advanced warhead. But there was a legitimate reason to suspect him. In the early 1980s, Wen Ho Lee reportedly told another U.S. scientist under suspicion for giving the Chinese neutron-bomb secrets, "I can help you—I can tell who ratted on you"; he failed to inform security officials of his various contacts with PRC scientists; he agreed to meet with an FBI agent posing as a Chinese official; he failed two lie-detector tests; and, of course, he downloaded massive amounts of material from a classified to an unclassified computer. His defenders seem to want affirmative action for security risks: Minorities can meet lower security standards to ensure that no minority pressure group will ever have reason to cry "racism." (Foreign intelligence agencies will no doubt be impressed by our commitment to diversity.)

Even so, critics of the handling of the Lee case do have a few legitimate complaints. Energy secretary Bill Richardson—who always has a keen eye for the PR bottom line—fired Lee at an internationally broadcast press conference, a breach of procedure that served only to imply that the culprit had been nabbed and the problem solved. So too, investigators, if they were right to suspect Lee, probably focused on him, to the exclusion of others. One reason we may never know about Lee's guilt or innocence is that the probe of his conduct was egregiously mishandled, plagued by amateurish bungling by both Energy and the FBI.

But there can be no serious doubt that the U.S. labs have an appalling security problem and that the Chinese took advantage of it. Consider Vrooman's defense of Los Alamos: It had spread the W-88 information so far and wide that the Chinese could have gotten it from any number of sources. Now, that's comforting. There is a reason that the Cox report (which did not mention Wen Ho Lee) concluded that the W-88 data had been stolen, and that the report was passed by a 9–0 bipartisan vote. Even the administration's own review panel concluded that the Energy Department "has embodied science at its best and security of secrets at its worst." The Chinese and other adversaries of the United States would be happy to see us continue in that tradition, with a strong dose of PC sensitivity policing thrown in.

OBITUARY

Lane Kirkland, R.I.P.

LANE KIRKLAND never objected when critics described him as a Cold Warrior, not even when they attached adjectives like "obsessive" and "hard-line." Though he hated all despotisms, Kirkland recognized Communism as a uniquely sinister creed, especially dangerous because of its appeal to intellectuals who presumed to speak for the working class. And he believed that a special place in Hell should be reserved for leftist professors and editorialists who would deploy ordinary men and women as cannon fodder in a putative war against class oppression or in a Third Worldist crusade against "American imperialism."

Kirkland devoted a lifetime to American working people. He served in various capacities in the labor movement, ultimately succeeding George Meany as president of the AFL-CIO. Kirkland inherited a movement that was already in decline from technological change and globalization. He tried valiantly to stem the tide by mobilizing labor's political muscle against NAFTA and other free-trade measures, usually without success. His successors have fared no better.

For different reasons, these were crisis years for liberalism. The belief in economic growth, equal opportunity, and an informed patriotism that inspired Kirkland's generation had given way to a corrosive combination of cultural radicalism, identity politics, and Cold War neutralism. Kirkland was not prepared to see the the party of Franklin Roosevelt become the party of McGovern; under his guidance, labor served as the only influential force within the Democratic coalition committed to traditional cultural values and a diplomatically and militarily prepared America.

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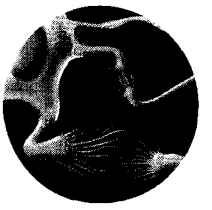

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But it is in the struggle against Communism that Kirkland left his greatest imprint. It is not often recalled that the AFL-CIO's early support of Poland's Solidarity union was greeted with dismay by many American foreign-policy elites. Kirkland chose to ignore the counsels of non-action. American labor established the means to get money, printing presses, and other forms of assistance to Poland's democratic opposition.

This aid was critical during the martial-law period, when Solidarity activists were being hunted by the security forces and the union's resources were being seized by the authorities. The AFL-CIO eventually expanded its assistance to democratic movements in other East European countries as well.

The 1989 agreement by General Jaruzelski to free elections spelled doom for East European Communism. Many of the region's first generation of democratic political leaders, journalists, and government officials had been dissidents, sustained by American labor's aid. Kirkland's contribution to Communism's demise was fully appreciated in the post-Communist world. He was treated as a hero when he visited Warsaw. At his funeral, ambassadors from the new democracies of Eastern Europe were prominent among those who paid their respects.

Lane Kirkland was no conservative. He remained a convinced New Dealer and a withering critic of the free market. But he was the last of the Cold War liberals, and his contribution to freedom's cause was magnificent.

—ARCH PUDDINGTON

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Memo to: WFB
From: Lawry Chickering

I just came across this. If you've never seen it, it is great.

Subject: Texas A&M chemistry midterm exam. The following is an actual question given:

—Is Hell exothermic (gives off heat) or endothermic (absorbs heat)? Support your answer with a proof.

Most of the students wrote proofs of their beliefs using Boyle's law (gas cools off when it expands and heats up when it is compressed) or some variant. One student, however, wrote the following:

"First, we need to know how the mass of Hell is changing in time. So we need to know the rate at which souls are moving into Hell and the rate at which they are leaving.

I think that we can safely assume that once a soul gets to Hell, it will not leave. Therefore, no souls are leaving.

As for how many souls are entering Hell, let's look at the different religions. Some state that if you are not a member of their religion, you will go to Hell. Since there are more than one of these religions, and since people do not belong to more than one religion, we can project that all people and all souls go to Hell.

With birth and death rates as they are, we can expect the number of souls in Hell to increase exponentially.

Now, we look at the rate of change in the volume in Hell, because Boyle's law states that in order for the temperature and pressure in Hell to stay the same, the volume of Hell has to expand as souls are added.

This gives two possibilities:

(1) If Hell is expanding at a slower rate than the rate at which souls enter, then the temperature and pressure in Hell will increase until all Hell breaks loose.

(2) Of course, if Hell is expanding at a rate faster than the increase of souls, then the temperature and pressure will drop until Hell freezes over.

So which is it?

If we accept the postulate given to me by Ms. Sheryl Atkinson during my freshman year, that "It will be a cold night in Hell before I sleep with you," and take into account the fact that I still have not succeeded in having sexual relations with her, then (2) cannot be true, and thus I am sure that Hell is exothermic."

The student got the only *A*.

Lawry: Fun stuff!

Thanks, Bill

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Your testimonial to Sir David Frost (June 14) was beautifully prepared and beautifully written.

But, " . . . provoking, nodding patiently, *evidencing* sometimes a trace of . . . " Why not *evincing*? It seems to flow so much better, is more like you, and conveys the same meaning.

I don't recall ever having noticed the word until at age 73 I decided it was time to read *Moby Dick*.

Would that I possessed a fraction of your linguistic skills.

Kind regards,
Charles E. Small
Westford, Mass.

Dear Mr. Small: I was prejudiced on the point (avoid *evince*) early, by a prep-school English teacher, and I've scratched around to remember why. I'm glad you forced my attention to the matter.

I found nothing in Fowler worth quoting to you, but did in Evans (*A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage*):

"Evince . . . Its modern meaning of *to show* (*He evinced dissatisfaction with your work*) is often an unnecessary and unsuitable elegancy. It should be reserved for such presentations of evidence as make a convincing inference (*The ruins sufficiently evince that anciently there were great buildings in this place*). The word, because it is an elegancy, has, in some contexts, a slight tinge of mockery, and gives the 'showing' a suggestion of 'showing off' (*He evinced great spirit but little skill*)."

Cordially,

—WFB

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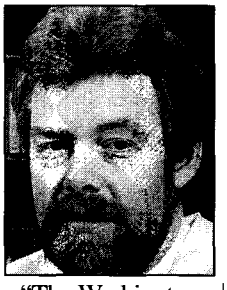

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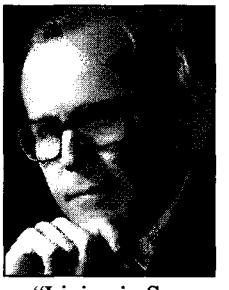

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■ JUSTICE ■

Hate and Punishment

Does the criminal's motive matter?

JAMES Q. WILSON

NATIONAL tragedies sometimes give rise to comic responses. When Buford Furrow killed a letter carrier and shot several children in Los Angeles, these despicable acts by a neo-Nazi stimulated a national desire to make sure "something was done" to prevent such disasters. One response was to call for tougher gun-control measures, though Furrow had already broken the law when he acquired the weapons he used. Some new gun-control laws may in fact be needed, but the most important thing is to enforce the ones we already have.

by Roman Genn

The other reaction was to call for the passage of tougher laws against "hate crimes." The reason for this demand was that it is important to punish the motive for the crime as well as the crime itself.

Which is an odd view. Suppose there were three men named Furrow, each of whom killed from a different motive. Alfred Furrow shot a letter carrier because he had taken out a life-insurance policy on him and wanted to collect the benefits. Buford Furrow shot one because he disliked people of different ethnic backgrounds. Charles Furrow shot one because he wanted to prove to fellow gang members that he was a tough guy.

Legally, these crimes are identical. That is, they all constitute premeditated murder. Each Furrow not only intended to take a life, he thought through the murder in advance. To prove this in court, a prosecutor must show, usually from inferences based on the defendant's conduct, that the killer deliberated about his actions and acted in accord with those deliberations. The intent of each Furrow was the same.

To convict someone, showing intent—but not motive—is essential. A motive is ordinarily not important in any criminal conviction. The reason is that intent differs from motive. The former has to do with the desire to kill someone, the latter with what state of affairs the killing is supposed to achieve. It usually makes no difference whether an intentional killing was motivated by a desire to get rich, to kill immigrants, or to prove one's toughness. They are all premeditated murder. There is no reason, absent some differences in their backgrounds, why the three Furrows should be punished differently.

There are, to be sure, cases where motive may make a difference. If the evidence of the crime is entirely circumstantial, showing that the suspect had a motive may help establish guilt. And there are certain kinds of murder—for example, killing a police officer or killing in the course of treason—where motive can escalate the penalty. But in these cases the motive can be shown by objective evidence, not by speculating about subjective states.

Hate-crime laws are an effort to make the subjective motive matter. But why should it? Why should hating immigrants be a worse motive than stealing money or earning entrée into a criminal gang? The proposed Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999 tries to answer that question by saying that "Congress finds" that hate-motivated violence "disrupts the tranquillity and safety of communities and is deeply divisive" and that it is "a relic of slavery." Congress, of course, has no evidence that either of these statements is true. If people killed others in order to gain money or strengthen gangs, as in fact they do, this would affect the safety of communities and would be deeply divisive at least as much as, and probably more than, killing others because of what they look like. And since the hate-crimes bill would impose tougher penalties on murderers who attack people because of their religion, national origin, gender, or disability, as well as their race or color, it cannot be that the law intends to correct the defects of slavery.

The bill would impose on people convicted of causing bodily injury—not death, just bodily injury—a sentence of up to ten years in prison. Compare that maximum penalty with the penalty people now pay for aggravated assault, which is less than four years in prison. And that penalty could fall on people who break state laws as well, not only federal ones, because hate crosses state boundaries.

This bill would be *on top* of the hate-crimes provision embedded in current federal sentencing guidelines. This existing provision is even more sweeping than the proposed bill (though, unlike the bill, it applies only to federal defendants). A person convicted in federal court of having intentionally selected victims because of their "race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation" would have his penalty escalated by moving his crime up three levels on the federal guidelines.

These sentencing rules are baffling. If a man rapes a woman, that is an abomination. Should it make a difference that he chose the rape victim because she was a woman? (Who else would he choose?) Or should it make a difference that the

Mr. Wilson is the author of, among other books, *Moral Judgment* and *The Moral Sense*.

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40	$ 123	$ 158	$ 185	$ 238	$ 260
45	$ 190	$ 215	$ 253	$ 330	$ 385
50	$ 253	$ 290	$ 363	$ 490	$ 495
55	$ 365	$ 413	$ 550	$ 835	$ 1,015
60	$ 503	$ 615	$ 845	$ 2,135	$ 2,400
65	$ 775	$ 975	$1,593	$ 3,900	$ 3,900
70	$1,338	$ 1,600	$2,970	$ 7,220	$ 7,220
75	$2,275	$ 4,870	$5,820	$10,370	$12,420

Male Premiums

Age	10 YEAR	15 YEAR	20 YEAR	25 YEAR	30 YEAR
35	$ 123	$ 138	$ 165	$ 223	$ 253
40	$ 148	$ 183	$ 225	$ 288	$ 335
45	$ 225	$ 300	$ 360	$ 450	$ 513
50	$ 338	$ 455	$ 525	$ 743	$ 828
55	$ 500	$ 670	$ 768	$ 1,640	$ 2,330
60	$ 783	$ 990	$1,335	$ 3,630	$ 3,630
65	$1,330	$ 1,650	$2,693	$ 5,250	$ 5,250
70	$2,473	$ 3,175	$4,860	$ 8,790	$ 8,790
75	$4,400	$ 7,443	$9,600	$13,260	$15,030

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rape resulted from hating women more than from sexual lust? If a gay man rapes another man—another abomination—does it make a difference that a gay man prefers another man as his sexual partner? Or that the victim was raped because he was a man rather than because it gave the rapist sexual pleasure?

In his splendid novel *Brain Storm*, Richard Dooling describes the case of a fictional man who murders a deaf African American. If he chose the victim because he was deaf or black, he faces a tougher penalty than if he chose him because his wife had an adulterous affair with the victim or because he wanted money the victim had. The novel explores the utter silliness of this legal theory. In an appeals-court hearing, one judge asks the prosecutor whether there is any reason that the hate-crimes law should not also bar selecting victims because of their views on the draft, global warming, or reproductive rights.

And this is hardly a ludicrous extension of an otherwise sound idea. The California hate-crimes law adds to the customary ethnic and sexual categories two more grounds for extra punishment: the victim's "political affiliation" and "position in a labor dispute." If you beat up a person because he was walking a picket line in front of your factory, you get an additional one to three years in prison. If you beat him up only because he had an affair with your wife, you escape these extra penalties. If you are convicted on "hate" grounds and manage to receive probation, you must agree to complete a course on "racial or ethnic sensitivity." The therapeutic state has truly arrived.

California authorities reason that it is important to impose these special penalties because violent crimes aimed at members of a specified group inflict greater injury on society than does "randomly inflicted violent crime." Really? All of these years I had let myself be persuaded that what actually frightened Americans was our high murder rate, almost all of which is anything but random in the sense that it is chiefly aimed at lovers, rival drug dealers, drunken enemies, and the like. The California deep thinkers imagine that having 20,000 homicides a year in America is less important than the unknown, but quite small and almost surely declining, number of hate murders.

Of course, the idea of hate crimes might be given some meaning if we added to the list of protected categories the reasons for actual murders. From now on, let us suppose you will get an extra penalty if you select your victims because they are lovers, rival drug dealers, or drunken enemies. But don't stop here. Let's add to that list victims who belong to a hostile Mafia gang or a rival terrorist faction. And don't forget the Oklahoma City bombing: We should give special protection to government employees and their visitors. Oh, and

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Giving protection to groups that have suffered abuse is possible within existing law.

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the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103: more protection for people targeted because they travel by air.

There are only two ways to think about violence: Either we penalize all violence more than we now do (which is my view) or we convert the homicide and assault statutes into some combination of affirmative-action quotas and Americans with Disabilities Act benefits. Can you think of any group that does *not* deserve special protection? If not, *every* group should be covered by the law—which is just another way of saying that the existing criminal penalties are too weak.

But of course the authors of the hate-crime laws—Rep. John Conyers and Sen. Ted Kennedy, in the case of the present proposal—are not interested in making the laws against violent crimes tougher. They are interested in giving special protection to a few groups. They are interested, in short, in making the criminal law an affirmative-action schedule. They want the law to be tough on people who kill blacks, immigrants, Jews, or gays and lesbians, all of whom, to be sure, have been the object of some degree of social oppression. And they want to give some additional protection to women. Thus, when the proposed law speaks of protecting people selected on the basis of "gender," the authors do not want to protect Caucasian males. I find it hard to believe that federal prosecutors, equipped with this law, will go around looking for white males who have been beaten up by black gangs.

But giving protection to groups that have suffered from abuse is possible within the existing criminal law without adding to the definition of a crime some vague notion of ethnic or sexual motive. The first way is to allow judges to take into account the entire circumstances of the crime—including the motives of the offenders—in determining a penalty. We do this now for almost every offender. That is the place where motives ordinarily enter into the criminal law. But the judges must have discretion in this matter. They cannot be told in advance that hurting a member of one group is more important than hurting a member of a different one, or even that the victim's identity is more important than the criminal's background.

The second way is to encourage the FBI, and equivalent state agencies, to put organized hate groups under greater surveillance. Arguments have been made of late that the Justice Department unduly restrains such surveillance. In all likelihood, such restraints arose when the department had to clamp down on the FBI's COINTELPRO program aimed at far-left and Marxist organizations in the 1960s. But it is possible that the restraints have gone too far. At one time, the Ku Klux Klan, however numerous its members, became an ineffectual organization because so many of its members were FBI informants. The same strategy should be aimed at far-right organizations that endorse views that, if acted on, would impose a threat to innocent people.

However questionable—in some cases, ludicrous—the content of hate-crime laws, they are not likely to have much effect. For one thing, such crimes are not that common, at least in the sense that a premeditated murder or assault reflects an ethnic or sexual bias. Those cases in which that kind of premeditation existed have been given great publicity of late. But the very fact of their publicity speaks to their rarity. If such crimes occurred every day, the press would not give them special attention. Of course, ethnic or sexual hostility may well exist in many assaults, but not out of premeditation. Two men get into a fight. They have been drinking and they quarrel about a woman or a football team. Very quickly their ethnicity may become

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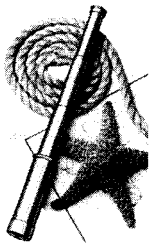

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a factor in their argument and in the justification they later make to friends about why they kicked the stuffing out of the other guy. But such offenses lack the degree of prior intent to make them subject to hate-crime laws.

Prosecutors will take advantage of hate-crime provisions to make a name for themselves in high-profile cases. Defense attorneys will recruit psychologists (and, if necessary, witch doctors) to "prove" that there was no real hate and to recruit jurors who believe that it is all right for a member of one ethnic group to beat up a member of a different one. And so we will have high-profile "hate" cases that will draw our attention and lead, no doubt, to more political demands for even tougher laws—on these crimes, but not others.

Suppose Buford Furrow had been kept in jail instead of put on probation. He would not have had a chance, at least for a few years, to shoot at innocent Jewish children. Making the likelihood of punishment greater is more important than stigmatizing the motive of the offender. **NR**

■ JUSTICE II ■

Crimes du Jour

Group-think comes to the law.

MIDGE DECTER

MANY, if not most, Americans have a somewhat peculiar relation to the issue of crime. They deplore it, naturally, and grow upset and sometimes even seriously alienated at the idea that they are living in a country that seems to be positively beset with lawlessness. At the same time, they are powerfully drawn to the romance of the criminal—witness the way they reward entertainers (Francis Ford Coppola comes to mind) for such achievements as polishing the glamour of the Mafia.

And if they deplore the high rate of crime in their midst, it must be said that, for the past several decades, many of them have also been busy excusing it. Such mitigating factors as poverty, insanity, drug abuse, and the sorrows of racial discrimination have been joined by "recaptured" memories of childhood sexual abuse as grounds for demanding that both the public and the courts be more forgiving of offenders. (As an old brilliant lyric by Stephen Sondheim has it, "I'm depraved on account I'm deprived.")

Nor does the confusion end there. Youngsters who are not yet 16 may commit acts of gross violence and remain under the protection of a family court that seals their records forever, while an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania who calls three noisy black students "water buffaloes" is deemed by school authorities worthy of expulsion. (True, expulsion is not imprisonment, but in the case in question, it required just as much legal talent and passion to overcome.)

But most bewildering of all is the fact that, while the rate of crime has dropped impressively, certain very active people have been busy creating new categories of crime. Take the case of the sex crimes newly defined and publicized by the feminists. According to the definition of the felony called "date rape," if a young woman climbs naked into the bed of a young man with the intention of spending the night, on the following morning, she is entitled to cry "rape" and have the boy arrested. For though she was naked and had agreed to spend the night, he had no right to "take advantage" of her. An even more significant, because far more widespread, recently invented crime against women is that called "sexual harassment." Millions upon millions of dollars have changed hands over the declared distaste of a number of women working in corporate offices or law firms for unwanted approaches, whether physical or merely verbal. (It seems that nowadays women may complete law or business school without learning to thwart unwanted advances—something every working-class girl is taught at her mother's knee.)

But if laws criminalizing male advances to women lend a whole new enrichment to the definition of criminal behavior, what are we to say of the idea of passing laws whose intent is to criminalize thoughts and feelings? For such an idea appears to be at the top of the agenda now. Moreover, many of the very same people who once tried so hard to soften the hearts of their fellow Americans toward certain crimes on grounds of the mental or emotional state of the perpetrator seem today to be leaders of the push for special laws against what they call "hate crimes."

The term "hate crimes" does not, of course, signify what the advocates of such laws actually have in mind, for after all many kinds of crime are committed in the deepest hatred—matricide, patricide, fratricide, say. A more accurate term might be *group*-hate crimes, which is to say, crimes committed against total strangers because they happen to be members of a particular group.

Thus the thugs who beat to death the young homosexual Matthew Shepard in Wyoming would be found guilty of having committed a hate crime. As would someone who set fire to a synagogue or church, particularly if it were a black church. As would one Benjamin Nathaniel Smith, member of a midwestern group called World Church of the Creator, who over the weekend of July Fourth this year killed a black and a Korean and wounded nine others, six of them Orthodox Jews on their way home from synagogue. And as, of course, would Buford Furrow, who a month later turned up with an assault rifle at the Jewish Community Center in a suburb of Los Angeles, shot and wounded three little kids attending the center's day school, along with two adults who were in charge of them, and later in the day shot and killed a Filipino mailman.

In addition to provoking all the old familiar cries for gun control—as if, should guns be controlled or even totally interdicted, a Buford Furrow could not get himself a van-ful of them—the attack on the center became a perfect occasion for demanding the passage of more special laws against hate crimes. So the cry went forth, in op-ed pieces and talk shows across the land: "Give us hate-crime legislation!"

The question is, What special penalty could hate-crime legislation impose

Midge Decter is a writer and editor living in New York.

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upon someone like Buford Furrow? And the answer obviously is, None whatsoever. He will be tried in a federal court (for killing a government employee) and then in a California court, and in both he will clearly be sentenced to the max.

The new campaign to seek additional legislation against hate, then, is not really meant to be directed at the cold-blooded race murderers of this world, the ones who declare themselves and feel themselves to be serving a higher cause. What more can be done either with or to them than will be done as a matter of legal course? We must therefore conclude that it is for *lesser* crimes that the cops and courts would be required to consider the thought rather than simply the deed.

This, make no mistake, would be a violation of the very freedom for which the United States of America stands. But set aside for a moment the question of constitutional principle—it has after all been set aside so often in recent years for the sake of social convenience—and get to the real point of the hate-crime campaign: The crimes deemed worthy of this designation will quickly come to be defined simply and only as crimes committed against members of minorities. We have certainly had enough experience in recent years to understand that. And again, at least to judge from history, first these crimes will be defined as crimes of violence committed only against members of minority groups, and as time wears on they will come to be defined as *any* "crime" (including critical disagreement) committed against members of minority groups, and finally the status of "minority" will be withheld from any but certain designated groups. So not only will people's thoughts be made a crime—and in what now-defunct country have we heard *that* one before?—the hate that is supposed to be stamped out by passing laws against it will end in all-out social war.

It is the chief glory of the United States that, in an ugly world, where groups engage regularly in bloody murder, this blessed society has found the means to keep a decent if not an always perfect civil peace. What in God's name, then, do all these good, upright, liberal advocates of hate-crime legislation imagine they are doing? Beyond, that is, giving vent to some of their ever-venturing, ever-expanding self-righteousness. **NR**

■ THE DEMOCRATS ■

Get Ready for KKT

The "next Kennedy."

JAY NORDLINGER

SHE is, they say, the "next Kennedy"—the member of the clan who will emerge as torchbearer for what the Kennedys and their enthusiasts like to call "The Dream." What is "The Dream"? You know: kindness to black people; reverence for nature; contempt for Republicans; that sort of thing. After the death of JFK's son in July, a nostalgia for what was praiseworthy about "Camelot" enveloped the nation. There was even some talk that this "next Kennedy" might make a vice-presidential running mate for Al Gore. She is not quite ready for the big time; but she is getting there, fairly quickly.

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend is lieutenant governor of Maryland—not exactly a glamour position, but one from which she is impressing Democrats around the country. She is the eldest grandchild of old Joe and Rose Kennedy, the first child of Robert and Ethel Kennedy. She is the first Kennedy woman to have stood for office; the first Kennedy of either flavor to have lost a general election; the first Kennedy of her generation known to have departed, even a smidgen, from orthodox left-liberalism. She is that rare thing—a true "New Democrat," distinguishable from Old ones like her Uncle Ted. The journalist and sometimes-Anonymous novelist Joe Klein has dubbed her "the best and the brightest of the young Kennedys." This may not strike you as towering praise, but it is worth a lot in certain circles.

KKT, as she is known (the finest Kennedys have swell initials), is far from your average Kennedy kid. She is sometimes referred to as "the un-Kennedy," or "Clean Kathleen." When she was younger, her brothers, apparently appalled by her concern for virtue, mocked her as "The Nun." Everyone who knows her remarks on how normal she is, not just for a Kennedy, but for anyone. The near-universal opinion is that she is friendly, humble, and thoroughly decent. She has a wide-eyed desire for good government and good citizenship that recalls a more innocent time. Her late cousin, JFK Jr., labeled a couple of his other RFK cousins "poster boys for bad behavior." Kathleen, as even her Republican opponents are happy to concede, is a poster girl for good behavior.

She was born on the Fourth of July in 1951, named after one of her aunts, Kathleen "Kick" Kennedy, who had died in a plane crash. She was 12 when her uncle, the president, was killed. Her father, the attorney general, wrote her a famous letter about her responsibility to her family and country. Framed and displayed in her home, it is a subject of everything written about her. In 1968, just before she turned 17, her father, too, was killed. She conducted herself—then and subsequently—with exemplary poise and dignity.

Kathleen went to Radcliffe, where she fell in love with a graduate student, David Townsend. After they married, they moved to New Mexico, where he taught at St. John's College in Santa Fe and she attended the University of New Mexico Law School. They were a couple who belonged to the age: He made her wedding ring; they used natural childbirth, at home; they buried the placenta under a tree—a southwestern tradition, so they claim. Kathleen began to practice "environmental law," when everyone on the left and his brother were doing it. Later, in Massachusetts, she managed one of Ted Kennedy's reelection campaigns and worked in the state government under Michael Dukakis. In 1984, the Townsends moved to Maryland. He joined the faculty of St. John's, Annapolis; she began her political career in earnest.

KKT ran for Congress in 1986. She had not been reared to consider herself a potential officeholder—that was for the boys. Only slowly had it dawned on her

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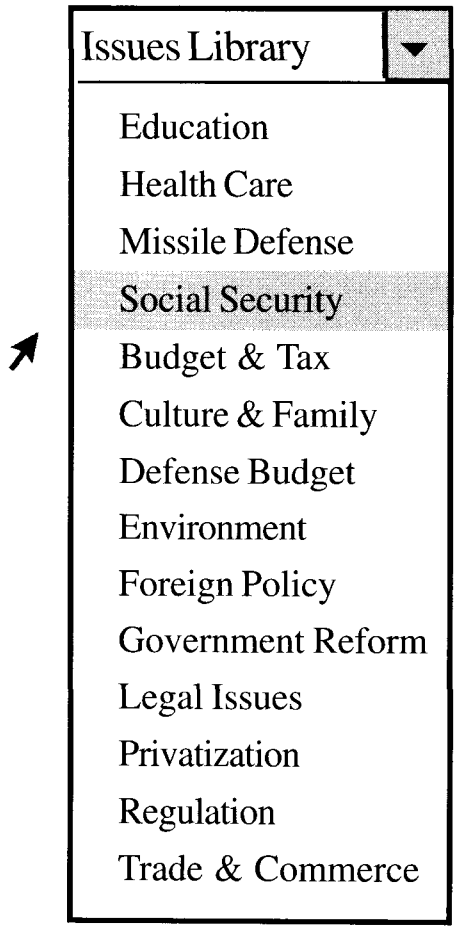

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that she could. Her campaign, of course, made national news, as she jogged from house to house in her tennis shoes, the very image of exuberant Democratic activism. She was rather awkward and ungainly, indifferent to her appearance. Detractors called her dowdy, and worse. Her speaking style was cause for derision as well: high-pitched and flighty. At first, she tried to go straight, calling herself Kathleen Townsend. When it became clear that she needed her middle name, she hauled it out, in a big way. She got thumped in November—but she has clung to the "Kennedy" ever since.

■

Townsend is the kind of person who is forever calling on others to be 'involved.'

■

After her defeat, KKT burrowed in the Maryland Department of Education. There, she hit on one of her signature issues: "character education." Dismayed at what was, really, the triumph of secular liberalism in the classroom, she called for the reinstatement of values—even morals, if you please. In a 1990 article for *The Washington Monthly*, a "neoliberal" (or New Democrat) journal, she attacked a teacher's guide put out by the National Education Association that condemned "attempts to inculcate a set of given virtues," such as the Boy Scout's code. She also blasted an educationist who criticized the concept of honoring parents, and another who associated patriotism with the Third Reich. "These comments are typical of the ideas your children's teachers are trained on," she fumed. "Do we really want our kids to revile Boy Scouts, abandon family ties, and believe that character-building is for Nazis?"

As she has assailed a lack of discipline and "moral collapse," Townsend has often sounded like that liberal bête noire William J. Bennett—a fact with which she is obviously uncomfortable. "Before you dismiss [character education] as a William Bennettesque ploy . . .," she once felt compelled to say. Being a Kennedy, evidently, means never having to eat at the same table as the Right.

When Bill Clinton was elected president, Townsend went to work in the Justice Department, as a mid-level employee, but in 1994 she got the call from Parris Glendening to be his running mate in Maryland. Her job, mainly, was to attract black support and raise money. Her magnetic cousin John held three fundraisers for the ticket. KKT was, for the most part, confined to the sidelines, still a hazardous speaker and a clumsy campaigner. The Democrats won in a squeaker, amid (credible) Republican cries of voter fraud. KKT became instantly the most famous lieutenant governor in the country.

Over the next four years, Townsend developed into, if not quite a swan, a perfectly presentable politician. Off came her heavy glasses; in went contact lenses. She acquired a smart hairstyle and stylish clothes. She seems to have received some speech training. She submitted to this makeover not because she suffered from insecurities, but because her appearance had become a distraction—women, in particular, had tended to be cutting about her. Even spruced up, however, Townsend had a bit of trouble gaining respect: Many snickered at her as a "lightweight," an "airhead," a "scatterbrain." Some in the legislature named her "The Space Cadet." Her defenders, however, say that her enthusiasm and guilelessness must not be mistaken for ditziness—she is a gregarious and open woman with a serious mind.

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend by Roman Genn

In the 1998 reelection campaign, Townsend was no longer a bit player, but the leading lady: Glendening leaned on her heavily. She smoothed over relations with the White House when the governor had the bad taste to criticize Clinton for perjury and degeneracy. The ticket also played the race card in a gross and scandalous manner, portraying the Republican nominee as all but a cross-burner. The Democrats won again, this time by a comfortable margin, with no need of cheating.

KKT is the ultimate "goo goo," or good-government, type. She is the kind of person who is forever calling on others to be "involved." (Scarcely can she speak a sentence without using the word two or three times.) She has a missionary's zeal about government and citizenship.

She is a fervent proponent of voluntarism and "community service." Almost daily she recycles that quotation falsely attributed to Tocqueville, about how America is great because it is good. While a proud, and often a sharply partisan, Democrat, she does not regard herself as ideological, but rather as "results-driven." She is pro-choice on abortion and in favor of capital punishment.

Assigned the role of Maryland anti-crime czar, she has been notably hardline. She has championed something called the Police Corps, patterned after the Peace Corps and ROTC: In return for scholarships, students pledge to serve four years as policemen. She is as likely to emphasize the necessity of punishment as the sadness of "root causes." As an anti-drug warrior, she is implacable, clearly motivated by her brothers' (well-publicized) struggles with addiction.

And the language she uses can be striking, coming from a Democrat—especially one who has spent her summers in Hyannisport. She speaks of "very high standards" and "children of God" and "the shame [shame!] of lifelong welfare dependency" and "the dig-

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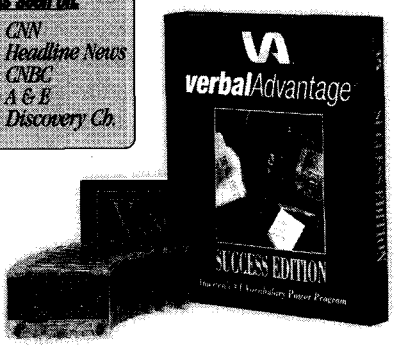

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nity of work" and "the very dangerous path" that is racial separatism. They call her the un-Kennedy, but, in a way, she is more original Kennedy than un-, standing for a JFK-like liberalism that has little time for kookery and nostrums.

The Kennedys, like the Tafts, have come down somewhat in the world. They have Teddy in the Senate, of course, and his snotty son Patrick in the House. Mark Shriver, son of Eunice, is in the Maryland legislature. And then there is KKT. There is a good deal of "rising star" chatter about her. She is close to Gore, for whom she has already visited New Hampshire, twice. (The Kennedy name remains extra-mesmerizing in the Northeast.) She is almost certain to run for governor in 2002, and, in the invincibly Democratic state of Maryland, she will win. Then she will be a national force. Liberals will at last have a Kennedy they can admire without guilt. And the rest of us? We will have a Kennedy we do not have to abhor. **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2000** ■

W.'s Whiz Kid

Bush advisor Stephen Goldsmith.

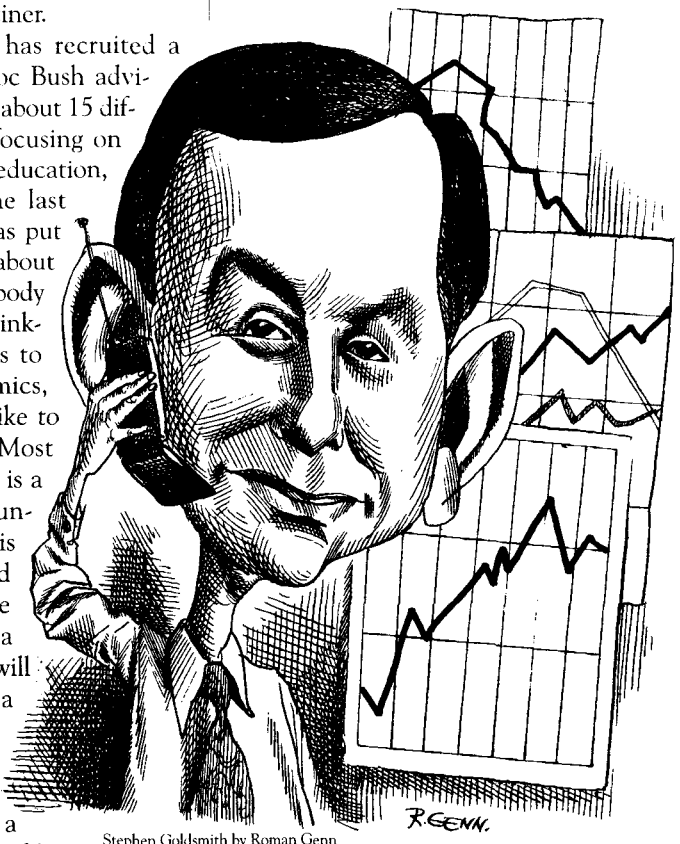
JOHN J. MILLER

STEPHEN GOLDSMITH, the mayor of Indianapolis, has dozens of stories about downsizing his city government, but the weirdest may involve dog tags. "We had a six-year battle to get rid of them," he says. Only about 15 percent of canines actually had the licenses required by the city. "This was something we clearly had to decriminalize." But Goldsmith ran into an odd coalition of interests: neighborhood groups fearful of feral packs roaming the streets, veterinarians worried about rabies, and animal-rights activists concerned that people wouldn't have their pets spayed or neutered. Though Goldsmith eventually won, he had learned an iron law of urban politics: "If you're in this business long enough, you see that every nonsensical ordinance has a constituency."

Taking on these constituencies has earned Goldsmith a national reputation and made him a hero to many conservatives. He busted up a taxi cartel, cut property taxes to their 1981 levels, and privatized everything in sight, from the city's golf courses to its car-towing services. The 52-year-old mayor also caught the eye of George W. Bush, and earlier this year he joined the Bush presidential campaign as its top domestic-policy advisor. He currently flies down to Austin every ten days or so, and will commute there two days a week starting in January, when he leaves the mayor's office for good. There is speculation that if Bush wins, Goldsmith will follow him to Washington as a high-ranking White House aide, or perhaps head of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Between now and then, however, Goldsmith will concentrate on his campaign work. He may well become the next celebrity wonk—a sort of rightward Ira Magaziner.

Goldsmith already has recruited a couple hundred ad hoc Bush advisors, sorting them into about 15 different policy groups focusing on issues such as crime, education, and welfare. Over the last several months, he has put in a phone call to just about everybody who is anybody in the conservative think-tank world, as well as to right-leaning academics, asking if they would like to join the Bush team. Most say yes, and the result is a large network of volunteer intellectuals. This Goldsmith-picked team—call them the Indy 200—may offer a sneak preview of who will get important jobs in a Bush administration. Christopher DeMuth of the American Enterprise Institute is a coordinator of Goldsmith's environmental working group. Linda Chavez of the Center for Equal Opportunity leads the immigration team. Former National Endowment for the Humanities chairman Lynne Cheney and social scientists John DiIulio and James Q. Wilson are also on board.

Goldsmith is well connected with the conservative intelligentsia because he has collaborated with it for years. Even before he ran for mayor, he was reading the Manhattan Institute's publications on urban policies and calling the Reason Foundation in Los Angeles to seek advice on privatization. Once elected, he maintained his contacts—and any politician who works actively with these groups quickly becomes something of a star among them. Here at last, they think, is a politician who is interested in ideas. Regnery Publishing agreed to print Goldsmith's 1997 book *The Twenty-First Century City: Resurrecting Urban America* only because the Manhattan Institute offered to buy 5,000 books from a run of 8,000. Indeed, conservative think-tankers routinely label Goldsmith as bright, even brilliant, and believe he is one of today's most impressive politicians.



Stephen Goldsmith by Roman Genn

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That's why many find his defeat in the 1996 Indiana governor's race so mind-boggling. Not only was he mayor of Indianapolis—a job that served as Sen. Richard Lugar's steppingstone to higher office—but he had that outstanding national reputation. He raised more money than any other candidate in state history and held a huge lead in the polls over his Democratic opponent, Frank O'Bannon. He was doing everything right. Yet he lost, failing even to carry the voters who elected him twice as mayor. "I ran an awful campaign," he admits. Among his problems were an off-putting public persona and an unlively platform. "Sometimes he seems robotic, like Data on *Star Trek*," says one prominent Indiana Republican. "You wonder how a person like this even becomes involved in politics. Does he prefer people or supply curves?"

■

Goldsmith has always avoided controversies that whip up conservative sentiment.

■

"This is why Bush is the candidate and I'm not," says Goldsmith. In his book, he introduces a case for privatization with a story only a wonk could love: "Forced by competition to further effort, the water company returned with a new proposal to collect sewer bills for $2 million annually, for a savings of 30 percent." That's good government, but it's not an applause line.

Bush, of course, has not made privatization a campaign theme, at least not in its traditional sense. And Goldsmith didn't win Bush's attention because he figured out how to save money on his city's sewer-bill collections. He won it for advocating the kind of public-private partnerships that Bush regards as a cornerstone to his notion of "compassionate conservatism." In July, when Bush announced one of the few substantive policy proposals he has made as a presidential candidate—$8 billion in tax incentives for charitable giving—he did it in Indianapolis. The location was not chosen randomly. For years, Goldsmith (who describes himself as a "somewhat observant" Jew) has worked with churches and other faith-based organizations to devolve government operations to community groups. In Goldsmith's domain, a group of churches runs several dozen city parks, and the juvenile-justice system tries to connect offenders with Christian youth organizations.

Asked to define "compassionate conservatism," Goldsmith responds, "I don't know if there's an official definition from the campaign." He thinks for a moment, then adds, "To me, it means remaining true to conservative principles about the size of government but also recognizing that the market sometimes leaves people behind and government has an obligation to reach out to them." When E. J. Dionne of the *Washington Post* told Goldsmith that he thought compassionate conservatism sounded a lot like the "Third Way" politics of Bill Clinton and other so-called New Democrats, Goldsmith countered, "It's a Fourth Way." Now there's a bumper sticker: *W.: The Fourth Way*.

Goldsmith has always avoided the kinds of controversies that whip up conservative sentiment. At a National Press Club speech last January, in the midst of the Clinton impeachment scandal, he was asked for a view "from the heartland." He demurred: "My job is to pick up the trash really—and I'm stopping there." In fact, Goldsmith never made any statement at all about impeachment, when congressional Republicans could have used the support. Even today, the mayor refuses an invitation to comment.

Conservatives hoped that a Goldsmith governorship would set him on a trajectory for higher office. There were whispers that maybe he would run for the White House himself one day. But nobody hears that anymore. In fact, the only person now in Washington who had his ticket punched by that 1996 race was Joe Andrew, then head of the state Democrats, now chairman the Democratic National Committee. And what does he think about Goldsmith hooking up with Bush? "Let's see, the last time I worked against him, he was fundraising like crazy and had a huge lead in the polls" over an uncharismatic candidate. Thinking ahead to a Bush–Gore race, he adds, "That sounds vaguely familiar." **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2000 II** ■

Will Pat Go?

Why Buchanan may bolt the GOP.

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

In a race that seems destined to give us a choice between TweedleBush and TweedleGore, almost the only interesting question is whether Patrick J. Buchanan will abandon the GOP and seek the presidential nomination of the Reform party. He must feel enormously tempted to do so, for ample reasons.

If Buchanan is indeed to defect, he must make up his mind soon—by December at the latest. "Sore loser" rules mean that he cannot run in GOP primaries and then switch to another party for the general election. And because the media have played up the possibility of his departure, some of his grass-roots supporters are themselves switching to other candidates, such as Dan Quayle. With the risk of his own organization imploding, and the fact that the internal politics of the Reform nomination are themselves highly fluid, he would be well advised to decide earlier than December.

Republican operatives certainly assume that he is thinking hard about it. Their anxiety that a third-party Buchanan would damage the prospects of George W. Bush in the general election explains the recent mass posting of valentines to him. Bush himself made a "gracious" appeal that his rival stay in the party. A bullyboy and sinister force only a few years ago, Buchanan is now a gentleman, an orator, the soul of the GOP. Pat, go? Heaven forfend.

Buchanan himself is weighing the odds very cautiously. With the example before him of Sen. Bob Smith, whose third-party bid foundered on general lack of interest on the part of third parties, he must wonder about his chances

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of getting the Reform nomination. For that too is, at least potentially, a crowded field. The omens—in modern parlance, opinion polls—are good. A *National Journal* poll asked 1,000 voters how they would vote if Bush were the GOP nominee, Gore the Democrats', and various "fancied runners" the Reform candidate. Buchanan headed the Reform field—with 16 percent against Bush's 39 percent and Gore's 35 percent. Other Reform ratings were Warren Beatty with 11 percent, Ross Perot with 6 percent, and Lowell Weicker with 4 percent.

What was especially significant was that Buchanan beat Gov. Jesse Ventura, who scored 12 percent. For if anyone is likely to frustrate a Buchanan bid for Reform's leadership, it is Ventura. Not only is he the party's new poster boy, he recently got his candidate elected as Reform party chairman over the opposition of the party's founder, Perot.

Until now, Ventura has denied any personal ambition for the presidency. His candidate has been the former Connecticut governor, Weicker—a most unlikely Reform nominee since he is the quintessence of the Eastern establishment's impudent snobbery whose most famous accomplishment was imposing an income tax on his state. Against a high-octane candidate like Buchanan, "Mr. Four Percent" would have little chance. If Ventura wants to secure control of Reform, therefore, he himself will have to run against Buchanan.

And then it gets interesting. Buchanan denies that he has spoken to Perot about an alliance against Ventura (whom he likes and from whom he senses no great ideological separation). Sometimes, however, a conversation is quite unnecessary. If Buchanan and Ventura were competing for the nomination, then the coincidence of interest between Perot and Buchanan would be so clear as not to require the signing of a treaty. The resulting battle might be bloody, but also profitable. A struggle between Buchanan and Ventura in the primaries (or, still better, at the convention) would rivet the nation, push the primaries and conventions of other parties into the shade, and give the eventual winner a tremendous boost entering the general election.

But the conventional wisdom is that Buchanan would be at a disadvantage both in the primaries and in the general election because Reform's voters are not really Pat's people. They are, it is argued, secular-minded libertarians, whereas Buchanan is the candidate of the religious Right. That misunderstands both Buchanan and Reformers. Buchanan certainly has moral conservatism in his mix of politics, but he is not solely defined by it. Protectionism and a nationalist foreign policy have been his major themes in recent years.

As for Reform voters, a study by Karlyn Bowman of the American Enterprise Institute suggests that, like most voters, they do not have sharply defined ideologies. What they have is a collection of general leanings that they are quite happy to ignore in particular instances. Thus they are skeptical of the efficacy of government, but support government programs in health and education. They are mildly libertarian, but favor traditional family values over nontraditional families by 70–19 percent. They favor lower taxes, but not if it means increasing the deficit. And so on. Where they differ from other Americans—and they rarely differ much—is that they tend to be more anxious about the future and about the state of the nation. Neither principled libertarians nor strictly religious conservatives, they are "social-fabric conservatives" who fear that our schools, our institutions, and our neighborhoods are going to hell in a handbasket.

These general leanings are, by and large, compatible with Buchananism. And because they are leanings rather than fully-worked-out philosophies, Buchanan would have some leeway in shaping his followers by incorporating their themes in his overall message. A Buchanan Reform party would hope to solidify this initial support with strong and firmly delineated policies promoting national sovereignty, the protection of America's basic industries, an anti-interventionist foreign policy, immigration reform, and traditional American culture and identity as against multiculturalism. It would then seek to poach

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voters from the two major parties by winning religious conservatives from the GOP with a strong moral conservatism, and converting Reagan Democrats from Al Gore with a strong economic nationalism. True, the Buchanan coalition, if it could be formed, would involve tensions; only small coalitions lack tensions. But it would also create tensions and divisions in the other two parties by stressing policies that their supporters like but their leaders oppose.

And Buchanan himself would be reborn as a candidate. At least one reason for Gary Bauer's stronger showing in Iowa (apart from the strong Christian Right presence in the state) is that Bauer put a fresh face on the politics of moral conservatism. Pat Buchanan was running as the Right's favorite son for the third time. Even though his message remained distinctive, it was no longer novel. And after two gallant defeats, Buchanan himself was beginning to look slightly shopsoiled.

A campaign for the Reform-party nomination would change all that. By the mere fact of his defection, he would shed all the social baggage of Republicanism—its reputation as the self-interested ideology of the country-clubber and the coupon-clipper. Nor would he any longer be regarded as the extreme Right of the GOP; instead (with a little help from the now-friendly media) he would be redefined as the voice of the "angry Middle," expressing a politics of sharp disagreement with the two-party establishment on everything from Kosovo to racial quotas. And, finally, once he was a leading figure in a credible third party, attacks on him by Republican hacks such as Rich Bond would no longer carry much of a sting. They would be no more than the common coin of partisan politics.

Even so, it remains overwhelmingly likely that the next president will be either a Republican or a Democrat. But that is a deterrent to Buchanan's switching parties only if he has a chance of winning the GOP nomination. And he has a much better chance of winning the presidency as the Reform-party nominee than of winning the Republican nomination in the first place. So the political mathematics are clear: GO, PAT, GO! **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2000 III** ■

Boy Bush

Another perpetual adolescent.

RICHARD BROOKHISER

In the early-'60s movie *Where the Boys Are*, Connie Francis and Yvette Mimieux found them in Fort Lauderdale on spring break. Now the boys are running the country. That's the only conclusion to be drawn from the behavior of President Clinton and George W. Bush.

Bill Clinton—coward, bully, satyr, liar—has been parading his arrested development before us for eight years. But recently we have been getting a look at the psyche of his likely successor. The flaps over George W.'s drug use and his mockery of the executed murderess Karla Faye Tucker hold the foreground, but a larger picture of a fairly unpleasant 53-year-old teenager looms behind. The critic Paul Fussell has written about "prole drift," the tendency of American life at all social levels towards tacky cheesiness. George W., like Bill Clinton, is an instance of youth drift—the unwillingness of Americans of all ages to turn 21.

Begin with George W.'s assertive casualness—the way he hugs bikers, high-fives people on rope-lines, and calls them "man." Forty years ago, even Elvis Presley called strangers "Sir." Now the would-be Leader of the Free World is just one of the posse. Casualness shades into crudity, and even cruelty. Who but a teenager would think of "Please don't kill me!" (Bush's imitation of Karla Faye Tucker) as a punchline? We've all laughed at worse, but grown-ups would be embarrassed if you called them on it. Bush thought nothing of performing his little joke for a reporter (*Talk*'s Tucker Carlson, who is a fan of his). Carlson's profile catalogued other bits of boorishness as well. When George W. meets someone, "his eyes get beady" and he talks "in grunts and usually out of the side of his mouth. The effect is somewhere between the prelude to a bar fight—What'd you say?—and the way a close friend looks at you before telling you a secret, at once intimate and faintly menacing." Carlson then wonders who his heroes are. He doesn't seem to have any; after a long pause, he mentions pitcher Nolan Ryan, whose face is on the cover of a local magazine. Is there anything the governor isn't good at? Carlson asks. "Sitting down and reading a 500-page book on public policy or philosophy or something," he says. Good answer, Beavis. Mark McKinnon, a Democratic media consultant who admires George W. so much he went to work for him, tells Carlson his boss is "incredibly independent of ideological interests or party interests." Maybe of any interests. All he lacks to be a compleat punk is a backwards baseball cap and a face that has decided that not shaving is the solution for acne.

American politicians have long struck observers as boyish. Cecil Spring-Rice, a British diplomat, said that Theodore Roosevelt was "about six." Norman Mailer described Ronald Reagan at the 1968 convention as not only still looking like a young man (Reagan was then 57), but looking like a boy, scraping his sneaker in the dirt and saying "Shucks." George W.'s father, George Bush, was given to spastic bursts of enthusiasm—gunning his cigarette boat through the harbor at Kennebunkport, applauding himself on the tennis court with bizarre exclamations ("Vic Damone!").

But being boyish means something different now, because something has happened to American boyhood. Kids used to try to act like adults. They aspired to manly roles—soldiers, lawmen, explorers. They mimicked adult rhetoric and behavior, often in highfalutin and romanticized forms. Worldliness was the gift of age; youth was the age of idealism. From playing at seriousness, boys went on to serious work. George Bush volunteered to be a Navy pilot at 18. Theodore Roosevelt wrote military history, chased outlaws, and led a cavalry unit. The child was father of the man. Now the child

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reproduces himself as a child-man, uncivil and uncivilized. Maybe the ghetto is the last place where boys try to model themselves on men; unfortunately, the only men available there are rappers, athletes, and the local drug dealer.

If we had to point to a moment when male adulthood began leaking out of American political life, that moment might be Camelot. Along with JFK's undeniable style came the frantic football games, the thoughtless risk-taking, the feral sexuality, and a general air of thuggishness. The first generation—Jack, Bobby, Ted—learned their mores in part from their despicable father, in part from adoring audiences (beginning with their doormat mother) who accepted anything. Their misplaced confidence in themselves rippled outwards. Even gentle and decent men like Theodore White and Murray Kempton wrote of Kennedy seductiveness with admiration and envy.

Just as boys used to learn honor from mimicking their elders, they also learned consideration. All the little formalities (so many of them trivial), taken together, slow us down and make us realize that we are surrounded by other people, who deserve thought, respect, and space. JFK was the first modern president to dispense with a hat at his inauguration. By 1960 the topper had certainly become a fossil. But brimmed hats of all kinds disappeared at the same time, and with them the habits of tipping and removing them that sent out signals of awareness and deference. By now, even at the presidential level, civility is as gone as Atlantis. George Washington copied out an etiquette book when he was a teenager. George W. squints his eyes and laughs at dead women (which, in fairness, is better than raping live women).

There is a policy catch. What will the boys without heroes do to show, if not their manhood, then their potency? We know what Bill Clinton does, and it's a lot worse than frisking with Monica. He lobs the odd cruise missile into Khartoum and Kosovo; however much they might be needed, in the abstract, their deployment was not thought out. What will President W. do, when he runs out of pardons to withhold? **NR**

■ CAMPAIGN 2000 IV ■

Coming Attraction?

Warren Beatty as candidate.

ROB LONG

THE floor of any movie set is marked with bits of colored tape. These are called "marks," and, for the camera to be focused properly, actors must stand right on top of the bits of tape. This is called "hitting the mark," and an actor who does it saves everyone a lot of time and money.

The "let's pretend" part of acting is easy: Look sad when you're supposed to be sad; act scared when you're supposed to be scared. The hard part is to do all that and hit your mark, too. Without looking down.

So now that Warren Beatty is thinking about getting into the presidential race, we should all be relieved. We will have at least one candidate who hits his mark every time—which is to be encouraged.

Tactically speaking, nothing could be better for Republicans than a Beatty run for the Democratic nomination. His politics are boilerplate left-liberal. He claims to want to return his party to its New Deal-New Frontier "roots," away from big money and big contributors, conveniently forgetting that in those years his party was even more corrupt and more beholden to special interests than it is now. It's been a long time since the Republicans were tossed such a fat pitch.

What Beatty wants from a president, he says, is someone who can "free himself from fundraising" and "spend his popularity and mold public opinion rather than follow it." What he wants, in other words, is a leader. After eight craven, cynical years, the liberals are finally getting it. Bill Clinton's tawdry presidency hasn't laid a glove on the Republican party (more Republican congressmen since 1993, more Republican senators since 1993, more Republican governors since 1993) but instead has gutted the Democratic party from the inside. The official strategy of the Democrats for eight years has concentrated on the survival of the Clinton presidency, not on the advancement of its core ideas. Warren Beatty is the crazy sister the Democrats have been hiding in the attic for eight years, and he's coming downstairs in the middle of the wedding reception to frighten the guests.

Of course, the Republican slate isn't exactly bursting with characters who mold public opinion either. So the second benefit of a Beatty candidacy would be to teach the other candidates how to behave like leaders, which means, simply, that you have to be willing to persuade. You have to be ready to disagree with an audience and still charm them. The problem with most Republican candidates is that they act like the people are already convinced. That's what makes candidates like Quayle, Bauer, Robertson, and Dole so off-putting. At the heart of their message is an assumption that the voters agree with them completely. This is a small-timer's strategy, and it won't work. The voters want to see you work. They want to see you exhort. They want to see you lead. But they don't want to see you look down at the little pieces of tape on the floor.

In the last presidential campaign, a good and brave man was bested by a cowardly man because the coward seemed more confident than the brave one. Poor Bob Dole seemed genuinely terrified of the camera, and try as he did to appear cheerful and young, it was an unnatural pose for a man who is dyspeptic and not. His shortcomings were crystallized in his brief, unhappy appearance on the *Today* show with Katie Couric. She grilled him on his tobacco policy. He looked uncomfortable. Running through his head, no doubt, were the latest poll data showing that 72 percent of all Americans supported Clinton's tobacco

Mr. Long, a writer for television in Hollywood, is a contributing editor of NATIONAL REVIEW.

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policy. He stammered. *Don't say anything mean, Bob* must have echoed in his head. And then he muttered something about dairy products being harmful, too. And that was that.

A thought experiment: Imagine Dole on the *Today* show again, being grilled on the same topic. He shrugs. "Katie," he says, "what can I say? It says on the box they cause cancer. Can't pass a law to keep you from behaving like a damn fool." He sits back.

That's what an actor would do: drop the line, wait with confidence, act natural. An actor who hits his mark every time makes it look easy. A great actor makes it not only seem effortless, but completely spontaneous, as if the floor weren't covered in little bits of tape. Ronald Reagan always cheerfully acknowledged that his training as an actor helped him in his presidency. The Left snickered, of course, but he was right: Reagan was a fearless speaker, an off-the-cuff joker, and he acted like a human being. He beat Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale because, among other things, he just seemed more real. And his confidence translated into policy. A guy who isn't afraid of his audience isn't afraid to disagree with them. And isn't afraid to try to persuade them.

Years ago, as a young television writer, I wangled an invitation to meet Reagan in his Century City office. It was a pretty standard photo-op affair (elevator up, escort in, smile, hello, handshake, flashbulb, escort out, elevator down), but a thrill nonetheless. About a week later, his office sent two copies of the autographed photo, along with the negatives. He looks great; I look like a doofus intern.

But they mistakenly included in the envelope the negatives to about ten other photo-ops, which, when I held them to the light, showed ten civilians in various poses, equally bad as mine, with crooked smiles and awkward postures, looking uncomfortable and out of place. Reagan, though, was in the same position in each photograph. The same gracious smile. The same quarter-turn-to-the-camera-left-hand-on-visitor's-back pose. If you stacked the negatives one on top of the other, his image would line up perfectly. That guy hit his mark. So does Warren Beatty. Look out. **NR**

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Fighting Words

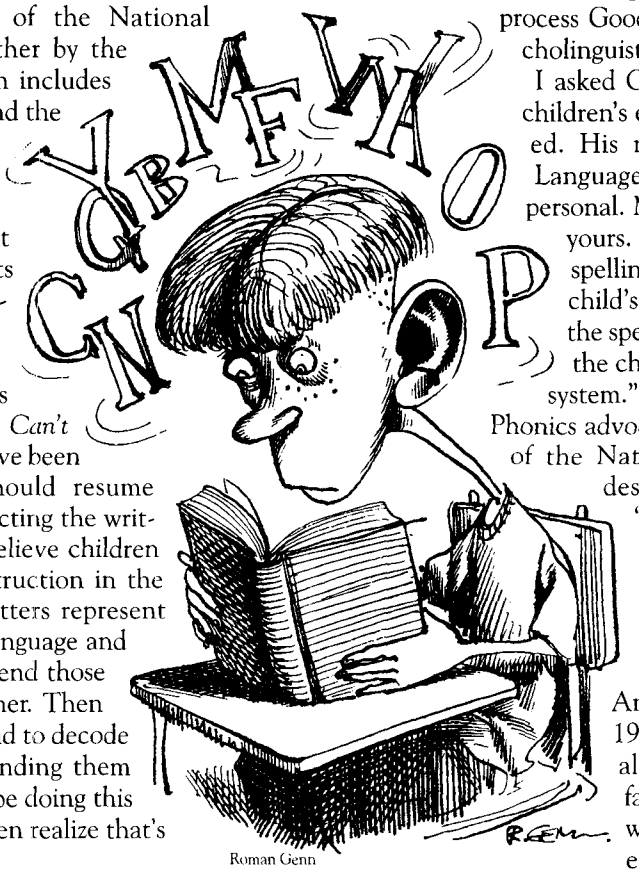
Why the reading wars aren't over.

RAMESH PONNURU

SUDDENLY, everyone's hooked on phonics. After the reading scores of California students dropped precipitously, a bipartisan majority of the state legislature voted to mandate that teachers be trained in phonics. In Texas, the other key state for influencing textbook publishers, Gov. George W. Bush pushed through a similar law. Massachusetts, too, now mandates phonics instruction in every public school. Pro-phonics bills are pending in many other states as well, and phonics products are selling briskly. Two major recent reports—one by a division of the National Academy of Sciences, the other by the Learning First Alliance, which includes the top two teachers' unions and the national PTA—recommend phonics instruction.

The triumph of phonics would be great news, if only it were true. The news accounts may give the impression of triumph, but parents need to read between the lines.

Ever since Rudolph Flesch's 1955 blockbuster *Why Johnny Can't Read*, proponents of phonics have been arguing that the schools should resume teaching kids to read by connecting the written word to its sound. They believe children should receive systematic instruction in the alphabetical code—in how letters represent the 44 sounds of the English language and how combinations of letters blend those sounds and string them together. Then children will be able to read, and to decode unfamiliar new words, by sounding them out. Before too long, they will be doing this so quickly that they will not even realize that's how they're reading.



Roman Genn

In recent years, however, the dominant approach to reading in the schools and, even more, in the teachers' colleges has stressed not phonics but "whole language." The debates over phonics and whole language came to be called "the reading wars" because of their intensity, but it's important to understand that these debates have *not* concerned how to teach reading. The question has been whether to teach reading at all.

Whole-language theorists such as Kenneth Goodman believe that just as children learn to speak naturally, by exposure to the speech of others, so can they learn to read and write by exposure to literature and "print-rich environments." Goodman, a professor emeritus at the University of Arizona, says that parents and teachers should read to children and encourage them "to experiment with reading and writing," "to build on their natural tendency to make sense of the world around them, including the print around them." Context cues will help children make sense of words, a process Goodman has notoriously called a "psycholinguistic guessing game."

I asked Goodman whether spelling errors in children's early experiments should be corrected. His response: "What's an error? . . . Language is a social invention and it's also personal. My voice isn't yours, my dialect isn't yours. . . . You learn to spell through misspellings. A skilled teacher can look at a child's writing and see that though some of the spellings aren't conventional they show the children's growing skills at the spelling system."

Phonics advocates such as Robert Sweet, founder of the National Right to Read Foundation, describe whole language derisively: "Put somebody in a house and put a hammer in his hand and he'll become a carpenter." Whole language is, however, not a new fad but an ancient heresy. Phonics instruction has not been the norm in American schools since at least the 1930s. Hostility to phonics goes back all the way to Horace Mann, the father of American public education, who inaugurated a tradition among educational theorists in disparaging phonics and its supposedly deadening drills. As Andrew Coulson points out in *Market Education*, Mann either misunderstood or misrepresented phonics—another tradition that continues to this day.

Influenced by Thomas Gallaudet, the pioneering teacher of the deaf, Mann thought that reading instruction should begin with whole words—with units of meaning, not units of sound. His wife published a reader that taught words by illustrating them, an approach that came to be called "look and

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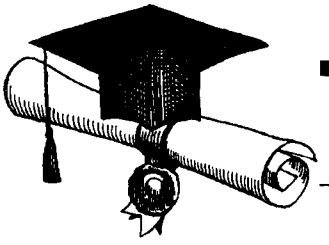

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say" or "sight word" and to be employed in the vapid Dick-and-Jane books many of today's adults grew up with. Whole language takes this approach, and progressive education's disdain for authority and structure, to a logical conclusion.

Says Goodman, the whole-language theorist, "Learning is something people are uniquely capable of, and when the time comes they learn to respond to the need for written language." In the history of the species, though, that time didn't come for tens of thousands of years. When MIT linguist Steven Pinker wrote a book called *The Language Instinct* a few years ago, his point was that human beings appear to have a universal grammar, rooted in biological affinity, for *spoken* language. Only a minority of societies has devised written representations of language, through glacially slow trial and error.

Children are unlikely to recapitulate that process in a few years. Building up a written vocabulary is hard enough. For most of this century, American schoolchildren have been introduced to fewer and fewer words per year because the prevailing method of whole-word memorization cannot accommodate more. Whole language makes the problem worse because now children are supposed to start out reading "quality children's literature" rather than readers designed to acquaint them with everyday words.

Defenders of whole language cast proponents of phonics as belonging to the 'far right.'

No one method of teaching reading will work for all children. But research as well as logic and historical experience suggest that instruction in phonics works better than whole language—both in fostering literacy and in getting kids to understand and enjoy their reading, which comes more easily when kids are not stumbling over every other word. Another research finding is that the best readers rely least on the contextual guesswork recommended by whole language. Much of this evidence was summarized in Jeanne Chall's 1967 book *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*, updated in 1983; though her findings have been rebutted, they have not been refuted. Federally funded longitudinal studies of schoolchildren and recent neurological research have confirmed and filled out these findings. As Keith Stanovich, a researcher at the University of Toronto, has written, "That direct instruction in alphabetic coding facilitates early reading is one of the most well-established conclusions in all of behavioral science."

A large increase in the proportion of high-school graduates who are illiterate or barely literate has coincided with the eclipse of phonics in this century; more than 40 million Americans are illiterate today. Poor teaching methods may also explain the recent explosion in special ed: Forty-five percent of kids labeled "learning disabled" have reading problems but no deficiencies in intelligence, physiology, or perceptive acuity.

Yet the prevailing reaction among journalists and academics to the mounting evidence of the failure of whole language and the success of phonics instruction has been to call it a draw: Teachers should take a balanced approach combining the best of both philosophies; there's no need to choose. Convergence is the message of most of those stories announcing an end to the reading wars.

When researchers call for balance, they usually mean phonics plus such components of whole language as reading good books to children, paying attention to how they are reading, having books around them, etc.—in other words, as two scholars put it in the *Annals of Dyslexia* of 1990, "suggestions about instruction that sensible people like your grandmothers and ours would have regarded as truisms." Thus the Learning First Alliance's report calls for a "proper balance" but makes clear that this does *not* mean "a little phonics on the side" or "stopping from time to time during reading or writing instruction to point out, for example, a short *a* or an application of the silent *e* rule."

But a little phonics on the side is exactly what many others who speak of balance mean. A typical formulation can be found in a position paper of the International Reading Association, an influential whole-language redoubt, which says that "phonics instruction should be embedded in the context of a total reading/language program." Goodman himself has complained that "administrators have become nervous about even using the term 'whole language,' substituting euphemisms or dubbing their programs 'balanced.'" It's rare to find a school that does not claim to teach phonics, but whole-language programs such as Reading Recovery remain more prevalent.

An even bigger problem than obstruction and obfuscation by schools is that most teachers have never been trained in phonics themselves. Lynne Cheney, a tough critic of the education establishment, notes, "The war is over at the teachers' colleges and whole language won." Most ed-school textbooks promote whole language and denigrate phonics; a small few are merely neutral between them. Professional associations such as the National Council of Teachers of English help exert peer pressure for whole language.

From their trenches in the ed schools, whole-language theorists have attempted to counter the political tide now running in favor of phonics. A common tack is to reject quantitative research altogether for research that is "not replicable" because it "focuses on a reader in a certain context." With the notion of objective evidence and thus the possibility of accountability out of the picture, the theorists are then free to concentrate on the motives of their opponents.

Opposition to whole language is cast as a plot by the "far right"—the phrase is omnipresent in *In Defense of Good Teaching*, a collection edited by Goodman and released last year—to exploit the fundamentalist fanaticism and "overwhelming fear of change" of Christian conservatives. Proof of their zealotry is that they say it's important to be able to read in order to have access to the Bible.

The far right's purpose in "frightening and politicizing rural

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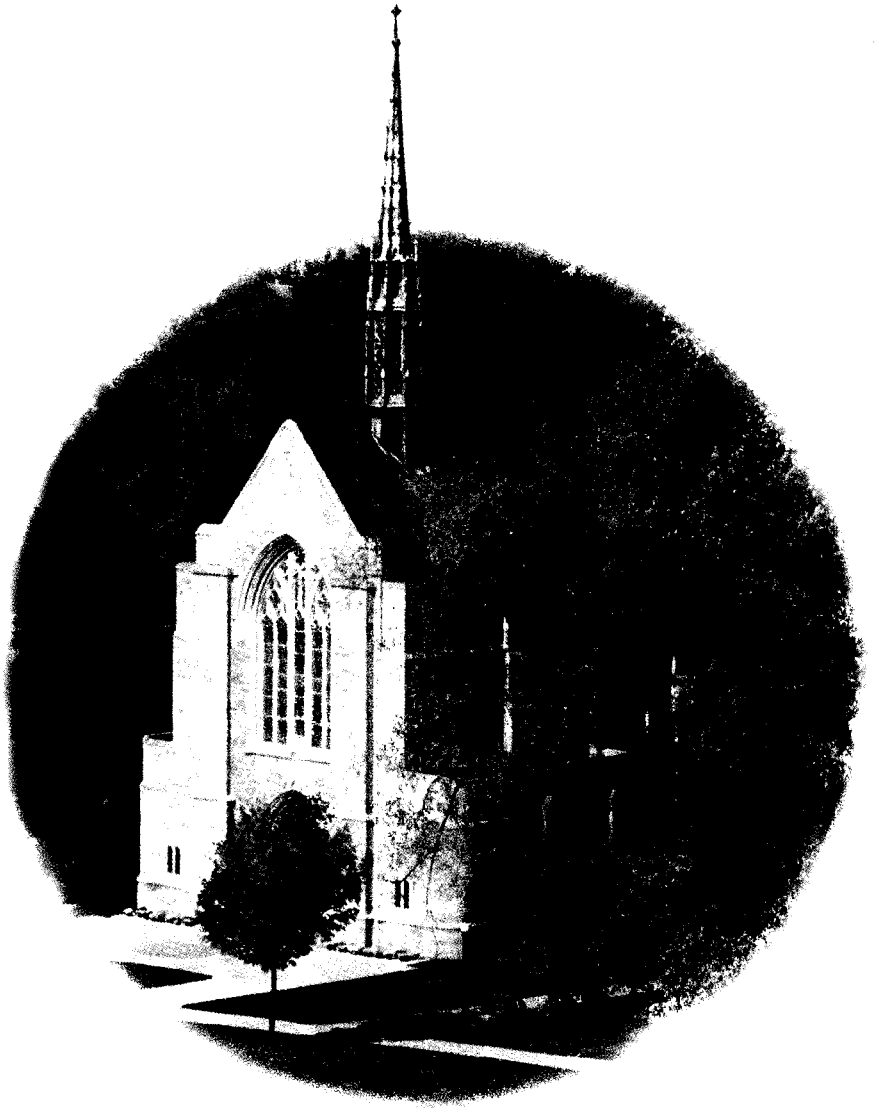

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and working-class parents," according to Goodman, is to reduce confidence in the public schools and, ultimately, to privatize them. The paranoia cannot be overstated. He writes, "It is the visible success of whole language, not its weaknesses, that has made it the target of a powerful coalition of forces." Reporters who attack whole language are encouraged in advance and rewarded afterward by the CEOs of their parent publishers. "Efforts are highly coordinated; often one sees identical wording in bills in states far apart geographically." Call the police!

Why have so many moderate, non-fundamentalist parents been joined this far-right crusade? Three whole-language theorists, writing in the March 1 *Phi Delta Kappan*, suggest that "some parents are unconsciously terrified of their children's dawning independence, as symbolized by their learning to read and write. . . . As long as a child spends most of her time enunciating t's and d's and decoding only synthetic, denatured texts, she will never encounter troubling or dangerous ideas, or begin to think and read for herself."

■

Reporters who attack whole language are encouraged and rewarded by the CEOs of their parent publishers.

■

Such rhetoric is evidence of desperation in the whole-language ranks. As Sandra Stotsky, a researcher at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, succinctly puts it, "They're going off the cliff." The most recent example: In a remarkable article in the latest issue of *Reading Research Quarterly*, a publication of the International Reading Association, Mark Dressman strives mightily to insinuate that respected scholarly critics of whole language are promoting a racist and capitalist agenda.

The reading wars are far from over. Indeed, in *Losing Our Language*, Stotsky directs our attention to a second front that progressives have opened. To the whole-language demand for rich, authentic literature has now been added a multiculturalist definition of authenticity. Among the many dolorous consequences is that students learn even fewer standard English words so that they may learn Native American words such as *parfleche* and *travois*. Academic goals have been sacrificed to political ones. As Stotsky explains, "The fusion of the anti-intellectualism of the multiculturalists and the antiteaching philosophy of whole language advocates is an educationally deadly combination in the elementary grades."

Still, Robert Sweet, the phonics booster, takes an optimistic view: "I would say although the mop-up crew hasn't finished yet, I believe we have truly turned a corner." With fewer than 15 percent of American children learning phonics, by his rough estimate, that mop-up crew has a lot of work ahead. Members of the far-right conspiracy to dismantle the public schools, meanwhile, can take heart that the Democratic party of California and the linguistics department at MIT have joined them. **NR**

Alamo in Ann Arbor

A test case for racial preferences.

STEPHAN THERNSTROM

PANIC may be setting in. The legal conflict over race-based admissions at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor may become "the Alamo of affirmative action," warned *Time* magazine columnist Jack E. White recently.

The Michigan suits, which will soon go to trial, have been brought by the Center for Individual Rights, a Washington-based public-interest law firm. At issue are preferential admissions at the university's College of Literature, Science and Arts and its Law School. No matter how the district court rules, the decision is sure to be appealed all the way to the top. In 1996, the Supreme Court refused to review the Fifth Circuit's *Hopwood* decision that ended racial preferences at the University of Texas Law School, and it may duck the issue again. But it cannot forever ignore the incoherence and ambiguity of its decades-old decision in the *Bakke* case. And it cannot indefinitely close its eyes to the fact that schools like Michigan have long been operating a "dual admissions" program difficult to distinguish from that found unconstitutional in *Bakke*.

In a recent *New York Times* op-ed piece titled "Inclusive America, Under Attack," former president Gerald Ford came to his alma mater's defense. He was inspired to do so, according to Jack White, by a briefing from Lee Bollinger and William G. Bowen, presidents of the University of Michigan and the Mellon Foundation respectively.

Bowen is the co-author, with Derek Bok, of *The Shape of the River*, which declared "racially sensitive" admissions policies at elite colleges and universities to be a total success. [Ed.'s Note: For a thorough evaluation of this work, see "Reflections on *The Shape of the River*" by Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom in the June 1999 *UCLA Law Review*.] Lee Bollinger is equally enthusiastic. Although Michigan now rivals the University of California, Berkeley, as the nation's most distinguished public university, intellectual excellence does not appear to be his highest priority. Racial diversity, he has said, is "as vital" for a university as "teaching Shakespeare or mathematics." In fact, one suspects that if he had to choose between closing down the English and math departments and eliminating Michigan's preferential-admissions policies, he would unhesitatingly opt for the former. In the conclusion of *The Shape of the River*, Bowen and Bok argue that administrators barred from using racial double standards in admissions will elect to lower standards for all applicants so as to secure enough non-Asian

Mr. Thernstrom is Winthrop Professor of History at Harvard and co-author, with his wife Abigail Thernstrom, of *America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible.*

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minorities in the student body. Bollinger would seem to be squarely in this camp.

President Ford opens his essay with a sad story about Willis Ward, an African-American teammate of his on the Michigan football squad in the mid-1930s, who chose to sit out a game against Georgia Tech, its officials having objected to sharing the field with a black player. "Do we really want," he asks, "to risk turning back the clock to an era when the Willis Wards were . . . penalized for the color of their skin?" Do we, indeed? Surely the lesson here is the vicious irrationality of treating blacks and whites differently—which is precisely what the "diversity" policies that Ford defends do.

Like most defenders of preferential policies, Ford insists that race is but "one of many factors" weighed by Michigan's admissions officers. Jack White makes the same claim, and argues that the U of M's preferential programs "have been reviewed to ensure that they comply with Supreme Court rulings." (He fails to tell us who did the reviewing. Surely the university did not assemble an impartial team of lawyers.) The Michigan system, according to White, is "among the best in the country—designed not only to produce diverse student bodies but also to withstand the sort of right-wing onslaughts, in the courts or at the polls, that have outlawed the use of preferences in California, Washington and other states."

■

It is hard to understand why the Michigan Law School feels the need to discriminate against white and Asian applicants.

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Perhaps Michigan's system *is* among the best in the country, but if so, one shudders at what must be going on at more typical institutions. This is how the Michigan admissions process works: Getting in is, of course, intensely competitive—but only if you come from the wrong racial background. The College of Literature, Science and Arts declares that "all qualified American Indians, Black/African American, and Hispanic/Latino American applicants will be admitted as soon as a high probability of success can be predicted." "Virtually all" applicants from these three "underrepresented" groups are accepted, so long as their high-school grades and scores on the SAT or ACT exceed a certain minimum.

All other applicants—Asians and non-Hispanic whites—receive radically different treatment. Since "many more students apply each year than can be admitted," and every "qualified" black, Hispanic, or American Indian is guaranteed a place in the class, it takes much stronger academic credentials for members of non-preferred groups to make the grade. In 1996, for example, the admission rate exceeded 90 percent for all "underrepresented" minorities with GPAs above 2.8 (a dismal B minus) or SATs over 830, well below the national average for all who took the test. Asians and whites, by contrast, needed a 3.8 GPA or an SAT score above 1,200 to have a better than 90 percent chance of admission.

Since the admissions officers can't be sure how many of the students they admit in the first round will actually come, they maintain a waiting list for those who come close but didn't quite make the initial cut. If some slots remain open when the letters of acceptance have come in, some students from the list are given late admission. Amazingly, this is a segregated waiting list—a list for Asians and non-Hispanic whites only. All minority applicants who met the minimal standards had been admitted before it was drawn up.

Although the two groups of applicants (preferred and non-preferred) do not compete with each other, the college makes a curious effort to make them appear comparable. It rates applications on a scale that goes up to 150 points. Up to 80 points can be earned for a perfect high-school record, 12 points for getting 1,600 (the highest score possible) on the SATs, 1 point for an outstanding application essay. In order to narrow the gap between the scores of candidates from preferred and non-preferred groups, however, the admissions office awards 20 points for being black, Hispanic, or American Indian. If race is just "one of many factors," it is nearly twice as important a factor as scoring in the 99th percentile on the SATs.

The minimal standards that minority applicants must meet are far below those of the rest of the Michigan student body, but the school insists that it grants preferential admission only to those students with "a high probability of success" in the classroom. Either they don't bother to monitor the effects of their decisions or they have an odd definition of "a high probability." In fact, alarmingly large numbers of the students admitted as a result of racial preferences fail to graduate. Of those who were freshmen in 1991–1992, for example, 35 percent of all African Americans and 48 percent of black male students had not received their diplomas six years later, dropout rates nearly triple that of the whites and Asians who had entered at the same time. And these figures include black students who would have been admitted even *without* benefit of preferences; they would doubtless be higher for those for whom race made all the difference. President Ford's assurances that students admitted to Michigan as a result of racial preferences have a "record of academic success" that is "outstanding" derive from wishful thinking, not any inspection of the evidence.

If the College of Literature, Science and Arts were really producing so many outstanding graduates, it is hard to understand why the Michigan Law School would also feel the need to discriminate against white and Asian applicants. The law school is a bit less vulnerable to legal attack than the college, in that it does not openly guarantee admission to all applicants from favored groups who meet a certain minimum standard; nor does it have a white-and-Asians-only waiting list. But the school does make plain that it is eager to recruit black, Hispanic, and American Indian students, and it clearly judges them by much lower standards.

The record indicates that the Michigan Law School has for many years sought to ensure that at least 10–12 percent of each entering class come from a preferred group, and the statistics demonstrate that it has consistently reached that goal. To do so, it has had to accept minority applicants with dramatically weaker credentials than whites and Asians it rejected. Thus Barbara Grutter—a plaintiff in the suit

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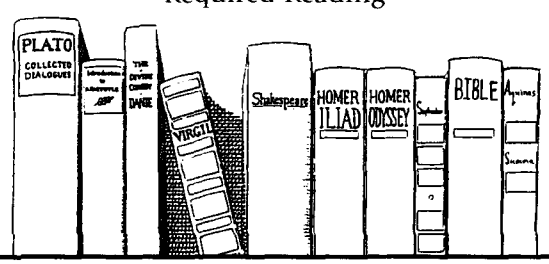

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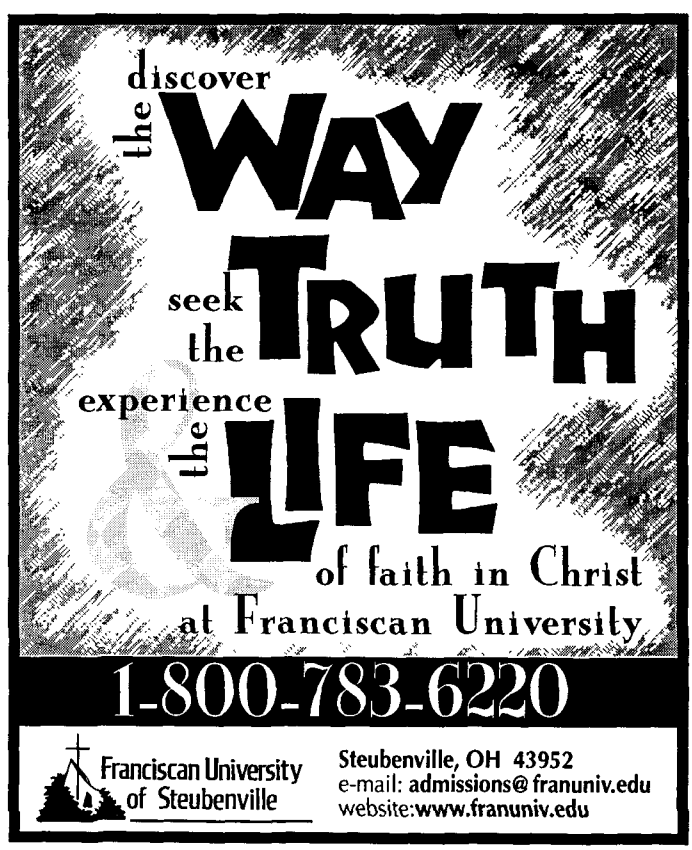

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against Michigan—had a 3.8 GPA as an undergraduate and a score of 161 on the Law School Admissions Test, which put her in the 86th percentile. All but 2 of the 43 minority applicants with equally strong records were accepted by the school, but not Barbara Grutter. Indeed, fully 80 percent of all applicants from favored groups with a 3.25-or-better GPA and LSATs of 156 to 163 were admitted. For whites and Asians with those credentials, the admissions rate was a mere 8 percent.

Neither the college nor the law school at Michigan is at all exceptional in its use of racial double standards in admissions. Bowen and Bok's study of 28 elite colleges and universities contends that racial preferences at those schools are really very modest. The authors' own data, however, show racial disparities in acceptance rates of the same glaring magnitude as found at the U of M, and similar disparities in academic performance and graduation rates.

These patronizing policies should be brought to an end. President Ford concludes his essay with the plea that we remember that "America remains a nation of have-nots as well as haves. Its government is obligated to provide for hope no less than the common defense." Certainly so. The persistence of a black underclass is a problem that we should not ignore. But racial preferences at an elite university do nothing whatever for the true have-nots (in Detroit, for example). Their academic skills are too undeveloped to give them the slightest chance to make it through the University of Michigan or indeed any other college. What they need desperately is better K–12 education. Only good schooling can provide them with realistic hopes of a better life. And race-based admissions policies in higher education are a pernicious palliative that deflects attention from the real problem. **NR**

Monkey on Our Backs

Evolution and creationism in Kansas.

PATRICK GLYNN

CRITICS have decried the Kansas Board of Education's recent vote against evolution as a throwback to the 19th century. In truth, though, both sides of the evolution–creationism debate are locked in a 19th-century quarrel, seemingly oblivious to 20th-century scientific developments that have rendered much of their argument obsolete. While the "ol' time religion" and Biblical literalism of Kansas board members have invited great scorn, many of their opponents in the evolution camp share a naïvely positivistic view of science, nearly as fundamentalist, in its own way, as the beliefs of creationists.

Not that anyone is likely to construe the Kansas board's decision to strike evolution from the state's required curriculum as a public-relations victory for evangelicalism. By allying themselves with so-called "scientific creationists" or "young-earth theorists," the board members did much to discredit more legitimate critiques of Darwin. While one can respect the piety of a person whose literal understanding of the Book of Genesis leads him to claim that the earth is no more than 10,000 years old, that individual should hardly be surprised if the world at large fails to regard his views as scientific. No less an authority than St. Augustine cautioned Christians against quoting the Bible as a science text and warned that by doing so they would tend to render their religion laughable in the eyes of more knowledgeable people. The Kansas board members fell into this trap.

But if the Kansans allowed religion to encroach all too clumsily on science, they were reacting in part to an evolutionary science that has too often encroached on religion. In 1997, Phillip Johnson, the University of California law professor and outspoken critic of Darwin, drew attention to the then-official definition of "evolution" promulgated by the National Association of Biology Teachers:

> The diversity of life on earth is the outcome of evolution: an unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable and natural process of temporal descent with genetic modification that is affected by natural selection, chance, historical contingencies and changing environments.

Modern geology has established persuasively that the earth is a good deal older than 10,000 years (the current estimate is 4.5 billion). Most scientists accept that the fossil record shows evidence of macroevolution—i.e., the emergence of new species—and common descent. But the evidence is a long way from supporting the claim that the process was "unsupervised, impersonal" or even based solely on "chance." That is not a conclusion based on data. It is rather the assumption of most biologists going in.

The board of the biology teachers' association reluctantly agreed to drop the words "unsupervised" and "impersonal" from their definition after receiving a letter of protest from the eminent religion scholar Huston Smith and Notre Dame philosopher Alvin Plantinga, who pointed out that while the fossil record may provide evidence for evolution, it fails to establish whether evolution "is or isn't directed by God." But the underlying logic of the teachers' definition—the implication that all life and species can be explained solely by chance mechanisms—remains the official position of the profession, indeed its central tenet.

All of which helps to explain why a middle ground in this controversy, while seemingly available in theory, has proved so elusive in practice. The *Washington Post* editorialized even-handedly enough about the Kansas decision, noting that evolution is a "reality," "no matter how inconvenient," and adding: "This is not to say that there is no significant debate

Mr. Glynn, associate director of the George Washington University Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies, is the author of *God: The Evidence*.

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over its mode and character. There is, in fact, a rich and wonderful one." This rich and wonderful debate, however, does not take place, by and large, among biology teachers in K–12 classrooms.

The draft science requirements rejected by the Kansas board had two striking features. First, the draft contained a remarkably heavy dose of evolution, more than most of us middle-aged folks remember from our own school days. Second, it presented evolutionary biology in a manner suggesting an utter absence of controversy within or about the field. The document included a footnote to the effect that students were required to "understand" rather than profess "belief" in evolutionary theory. But the curriculum made no provision for the presentation of dissenting views. The notion that there exists legitimate disagreement, scientific or even philosophical, about evolution was nowhere suggested.

Indeed, experience has shown that it can be risky for a high-school instructor to explore what the *Post* calls this "rich and wonderful" debate. Recently the *Christian Science Monitor* carried a story about a Minnesota biology teacher, Rodney LeVake, who raised questions about the validity of natural selection and introduced his class to "intelligent design theory"—the position advocated by some scientists that the order intrinsic in the universe provides empirical evidence of design or creation. For his troubles LeVake was barred by the local school board from teaching biology the next year.

Interestingly, the rejected Kansas curriculum also featured a component on cosmic evolution, including the big-bang theory. But nowhere did it mention an issue that has generated a vast literature in cosmology—the anthropic principle, or the mystery of the "cosmic coincidences" in the universe, which a number of scientists argue strongly suggest the existence of design. (Unfortunately, the majority of the Kansas board discarded the cosmic-evolution component of the curriculum as well.)

Part of the difficulty here is legal and constitutional. The Supreme Court has ruled against the teaching of creationism in public schools, and any discussion of intelligent design in a public-school classroom might border dangerously on teaching religion. But as a result of these legal restrictions, supposed or real, and the conventional mindset of the biology profession, students are missing out on a major revolution in the sciences, which may, ironically enough, hold a solution to the evolution–creationism deadlock.

The most interesting challenges to the 19th-century Darwinian understanding of evolution have come not from biology, but from new 20th-century disciplines—in particular, astrophysics and information theory. In reconstructing the evolution of the cosmos, astrophysicists have discovered a universe that seems mysteriously and intricately pre-programmed for life. Regardless of how life originated, this pre-programming seems almost incompatible with mere chance.

In addition, information theory, in combination with molecular biology, has revolutionized our idea of life. In particular, it has led to the insight that life is not simply matter, but matter plus information. DNA is in effect a "message" coded in matter. Matter can carry information; it cannot, so far as we know, create information. The question therefore arises, Where does the information come from?

In Darwin's day it was commonly believed that the laws of biology would eventually be reduced to the laws of chemistry, and the laws of chemistry in turn to the laws of physics. But now it has been established that the simplest version of DNA contains *more information* than is contained in all the laws of chemistry and physics. So such reductionism—a goal at the heart of the Darwinian project—is no longer conceivable.

These are the issues that would light a fire in students and open minds. But thanks to a legacy of bitter legal and constitutional conflict, and to the doctrinal rigidities of the biology profession, students may be exposed to "current events" in every field but the life sciences, as our schools remain locked in a war between two 19th-century fundamentalisms, one religious, the other scientific. **NR**

Birds, Bees, and ABC's

The facts of life in American schools.

RICHARD NADLER

FOR sex educators, the '90s were a decade of unrequited love. Academic research discredited their nostrums, and abstinence programs started to receive a respectful hearing. Then came the most crushing blow of all: Sexual activity among teenagers started to decline.

For years, sex-ed advocates had deflected criticism by explaining that teenagers were born to rut. Sure, the number of teenagers having sex was rising every year, in tandem with the expansion of sex education; and yes, these teenagers were having more sex, with more partners, at ever younger ages. But this, they contended, was an inexorable force of nature, and it was wiser to deal with the inevitable consequences than the inscrutable causes. "To do anything less than be explicit about protection is to stand by and let kids literally risk their lives," wrote one sex-ed advocate in 1993. It was an effective argument, recruiting to the cause of sex education and school-based condom distribution not just advocates of youthful sexual freedom but adults who, while perhaps disapproving, accepted parental impotence as a fact of modern life.

Now, however, the sexual revolution is receding among teens. At the start of the decade, adolescents were already registering higher rates of disapproval about teen sex than their elder brothers and sisters had. The ratio of teens with multiple partners fell, suggesting casual sex was on the decline. Deeper behavioral changes soon followed. Major

Mr. Nadler is editor of *K.C. Jones Monthly*, a midwestern journal of opinion.

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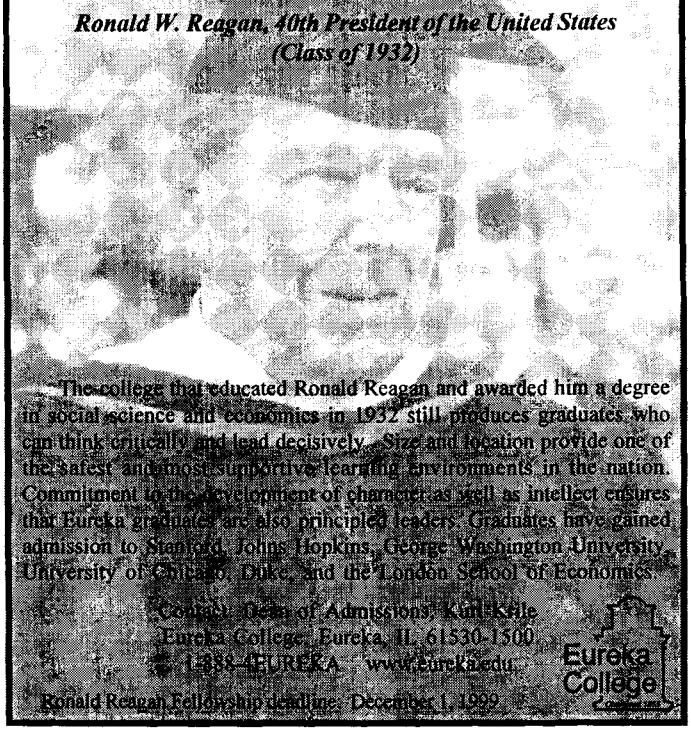

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social-science surveys recorded significant reductions in the percentage of sexually experienced teens. One study showed an 11 percent decline between 1991 and 1997. By 1996, teen rates of pregnancy, birth, and abortion had receded from their previous highs by 17 percent, 18 percent, and 37 percent respectively. The biggest improvements took place among younger teens. From 1988 to 1998, the National Survey of Adolescent Males recorded a 17 percent decrease in sexual experience among 15- to 17-year-old boys.

Confronted by what it once deemed impossible, the sex-ed establishment is taking a new tack. All this good news, they explain, proves they were right all along. Donna Shalala, the secretary of Health and Human Services, attributes the fall in teenage births to both increased abstinence and the "dramatic increase in contraceptive use at first intercourse." This is a bit like crediting both cigarettes and hoses for putting out a fire. Let's try to tease out cause and effect with more precision.

During the '70s and '80s, sex education became near-universal in the public schools. Most programs were based on a model developed by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). Under this model, school-based sex education had to be comprehensive so that kids could reach sensible decisions on sexual conduct. "Limiting the adolescent's tendency to explore, question, and ultimately come to his or her own conclusions stifles autonomy and a sense of self," wrote sex educators Susan Wilson and Catherine Sanderson. Shorn of ignorance and fear, kids can learn to enjoy sex without guilt or danger. A SIECUS expert recommended "teaching teens about oral sex and mutual masturbation in order to help them delay the onset of sexual intercourse."

Yet, according to this school of thought, detailed information is not so crucial for parents. "While it is generally desirable for parents to be involved in their children's contraceptive decisions," states a SIECUS position paper, "the right of each person to confidentiality and privacy . . . is paramount."

The results of this approach are now obvious, seen in the number of unplanned pregnancies, aborted fetuses, and welfare dependents. One SIECUS prediction, however, did prove correct: Sex ed increased the rate of contraceptive use among teens. But as teen "autonomy" trumped teen precaution, rates of sexual precocity rose even faster. While sex educators and the media obsessed over increased access to contraception, unwed teenaged girls were conceiving at record rates. Worse, the most rapid growth in sexual activity took place among the youngest teens. These teens use contraception erratically. The Centers for Disease Control reported that girls aged 15 to 17 were more than twice as likely to "miss" two or more birth-control pills per cycle as 18- and 19-year-olds.

So, can increased teen sexual activity fairly be attributed to sex ed? Yes, it can. Researchers have found that instruction in sexual biology and birth control is associated with earlier ages of first intercourse. When adults teach kids how to have sex, how to use contraceptives, and where to get them, the kids simply have more sex. And this approach is the heart and soul of sex-ed ideology.

For Carol Everett, who ran a chain of abortion clinics in the Dallas area, school-based programs were an investment. "When I went to those schools," she says, "my agenda was very clear. The first thing was to get the students to laugh at their parents, because if they laughed at their parents with me, they would not go home and tell their parents what I told them. . . . I'd say, 'Would your parents help you get on a method of contraception if you decided to become sexually active? Don't worry about that, here's a card, come to me.' And the next day . . . the telephone would start to ring." Everett, now a pro-lifer, says, "I knew that anytime I went to a school, the pregnancy rate went up sharply. I knew that by my own statistics. I knew that by working with Planned Parenthood, and by reading their statistics." More pregnancies meant more abortions.

A 1993 study by Leighton Ku and others suggested that the most effective method in reducing teen sex activity is not comprehensive sex ed but the teaching of resistance (say-no-to-sex) skills. Another major study found that delayed sexual debuts are associated—surprise, surprise—with "high levels of parent-family connectedness [and] parental disapproval of their adolescent being sexually active." In perhaps the unkindest cut of all for the sex-ed establishment, the study noted that parents' "disapproval of their adolescent's using contraception" is "the strongest family variable counter indicative of teen pregnancy." Indeed, this disapproval is more protective against pregnancy than "effective contraceptive use [at] first/last sex." Other factors that have been found to delay intercourse include religious faith, an intact, two-parent household, a mother at home, and a "pledge of virginity."

This emerging portrait of effective sex education looks less like the SIECUS guidelines than like a Christian Coalition broadside: authoritative adults, buttressed by faith and moral absolutes, instilling in children pride in sexual purity and disapproval of promiscuity. Still another study found that the proportion of high-school girls learning resistance skills increased from 62 percent to 90 percent between the late '80s and 1995.

The final reason to doubt Shalala's contention that the decline in teen pregnancy can be attributed to a "dramatic increase in contraceptive use" is that, in fact, teen contraception has not become more effective in the '90s. Yes, condom use went up, but this was more than offset by the declining use of the birth-control pill. From 1988 to 1995, the percentage of currently sexually active 15- to 19-year-old females using the pill decreased from 59 to 45, while the percentage using male condoms increased from 33 to 37.

According to *Contraceptive Technology*, the authoritative source on contraceptive-failure rates, the typical user of birth-control pills has a 5 percent chance of getting pregnant over the course of a year; her chances rise to 14 percent if instead she relies on condoms. And condom awareness has done nothing to reduce the riskiest behaviors. The percentage of sexually active 15- to 19-year-olds using no contraception was 19 percent in 1988—and 19 percent in 1995.

In short, the big change among teens in the '90s has been not better contraception, but better morals. Fewer adolescents had intercourse, particularly those 17 years and younger. And those who did have intercourse had it less frequently, and with fewer partners. Less sex meant fewer pregnancies, births, and abortions.

Go figure. **NR**

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Hook-up U

Modesty is still a stranger on campus.

AMY M. HOLMES

THE statistics are reassuring. Just last year, the Centers for Disease Control reported that, for the first time in decades, more than half of America's high-school students described themselves as virgins. According to the Urban Institute, the rate of sexual activity among 17- to 19-year-old boys in urban areas declined from 75 percent in 1979 to 68 percent in 1995. Over the same period, the proportion of young men who approved of nonmarital sex fell from 80 percent to 71 percent.

Popular culture, though, tells a different story—as anyone who has channel-surfed past MTV's *Spring Break*, listened to the Backstreet Boys, or saw *American Pie* can testify. The *Washington Post*'s front page recently carried the headline "Parents Are Alarmed by an Unsettling New Fad in Middle Schools: Oral Sex."

While the statistics may be improving, sexual practices among teenagers are becoming increasingly dehumanizing. Consider the phrase "hooking up," a casual reference to casual encounters that is part of the American collegiate vocabulary. Now primary-school students are describing their sexual experimentation in the same impersonal terms. A high-school junior explained to the *Atlanta Journal* in May that "risky behavior is just something to do when you're bored. Like, um, sex, smoking, stealing, doing drugs. It's just something to do."

While not everybody does it, many suffer, particularly girls. The *Post*'s story, on an oral-sex ring in a Williamsburg, Va., middle school, quoted one of the eighth-grade boys involved as saying, "The girls made up this hook-up thing . . . and it turned out to mean a lot more to them than to us. The guys hooked up with the girls because the girls were hot. The girls wanted to have a relationship."

The picture does not get any prettier at our elite college campuses. Georgetown University, for example, has been the site of several "Money Parties." Students pay to attend these invitation-only events, at which they trade sexual favors for Monopoly money—and the guest who finishes with the most takes home a percentage of the door. The only tender here is commercial, as free love paradoxically earns cash. Maybe the *Post* should run a new headline: "Parents Are Alarmed by Unsettling New Fad at Elite Universities: Prostitution."

Dawn Scheirer, a recent Georgetown graduate and founding editor of a conservative-oriented guide for female students, was invited to such a party her senior year. "My invitation came from a male friend who was interested," she recalls. "He presented it as if it were some sort of compliment. It was like I was part of the elite, like I had this select opportunity. I told him I was busy that night." Sheltered her first two years from hook-up anarchy by a serious boyfriend, Scheirer says that "once I was available, I sort of got in the loop. There were plenty of guys ready to pimp me out."

Yale, too, boasts a progressive attitude toward sexuality, as one might expect from its coed bathrooms. Yale undergrads are notably evenhanded in their appraisal. As it was explained to me by a trio of hook-up–averse women, a multi-partnered man is referred to as a "slush," a hybrid of "slut" and "lush." His female equivalent is a "party favor."

Hooking-up, as it happens, does not necessarily involve intercourse. And at Yale, it rarely does, complains one 1996 graduate writing for *Playboy*: "Yale is a culture in which sex toys, dirty talk, homosexuality and oral sex raise no eyebrows, but intercourse is a big, big, deal." A pre-med woman who was graduated this spring explained to me, "It doesn't matter if you haven't had sex, it can still be sleazy."

At Smith College, enterprising coeds are logging on to hook up. Potential partners are culled from chat rooms, e-mails are exchanged, and arrangements are made for nervous weekend meetings. A 1999 graduate, Laura Barrett, describes one such encounter: "One of my friends was sort of dating a guy over the computer. They decided that they were going to lose their virginity to each other. You kind of hoped they would have dated each other face to face first. They did it the first time they met each other. It was a little weird."

■

Sexual practices among teenagers are becoming increasingly dehumanizing.

■

Erin McGlinchey, a senior launching a Smith edition of the Georgetown guide, says that Internet-coordinated hook-ups are becoming more common among both straight women and lesbians. She is pessimistic about the possibility that hooking up might yield to dating, that pastime of yesteryear. "I don't see any signals that dating is coming back," she says. "People don't seem satisfied, but I don't think they see that many alternatives. We've gotten used to this. Why should guys change? The guys can come and get free breakfast." Why buy dinner, when you can breakfast for free?

Again, some polling data indicate that kids today are becoming more conservative in their sexual behavior and attitudes. Last fall, the UCLA Survey of College Freshmen found approval of promiscuity at its lowest point in 25 years. *The Rules*, the book that counseled girls to hold out for commitment, was a monster hit. But if sexual nihilism has gone half way around the world, modesty is just putting its boots on. **NR**

Miss Holmes is a policy analyst for the Independent Women's Forum and a Fox News contributor.

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■ COVER ESSAY ■

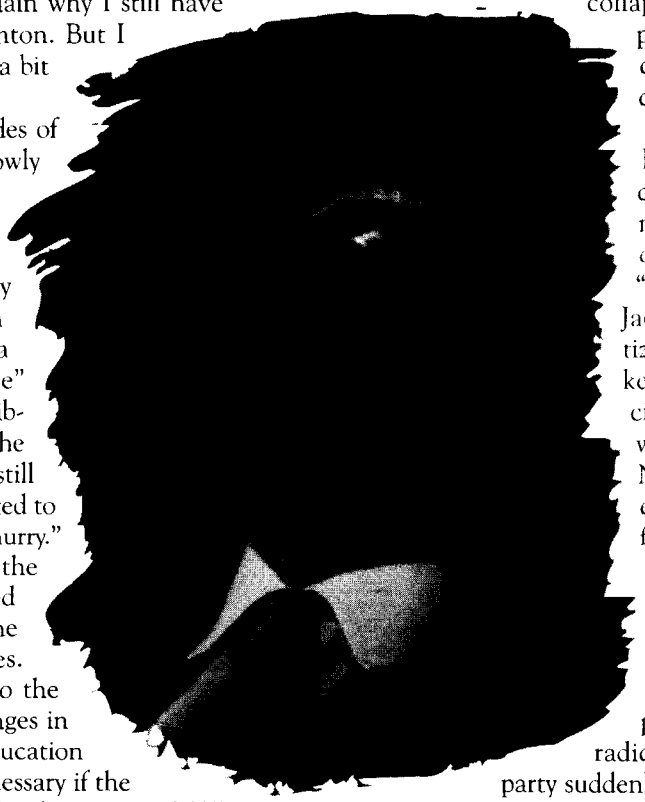
Life of His Party

How Bill Clinton saved the Democrats.

NORMAN PODHORETZ

SINCE I come not to bury Bill Clinton but to praise him (well, a little), I had better begin by signing the requisite loyalty oath. So: I hereby affirm my belief that he has besmirched the office of the presidency, that he has been guilty of numerous criminal offenses, and that he deserved to be convicted by the Senate after being impeached by the House.

Having got all that out of my system, I can now proceed with a clear conscience to explain why I still have something good to say for Clinton. But I can do so only by sketching in a bit of historical background.



In 1960, the ideas and attitudes of the New Left and its less narrowly political cousin the counterculture (which together were called the Movement) had been confined to a tiny minority of intellectuals. Now, to certain conservatives, there was not a "dime's worth of difference" between these radicals and the liberals. So far as they could tell, the radicals of the early '60s were still what the Communists had affected to be in the mid-'30s: "liberals in a hurry."

But this was not at all how the '60s radicals themselves assessed the political scene. To them, the liberals were not laggard allies. They were the main obstacle to the drastic and thoroughgoing changes in areas like race, poverty, and education that the radicals considered necessary if the "American Dream" (as they defined it) was to fulfill its promise. So, too, it was the liberal establishment—as represented first by Kennedy and then by Johnson—that stood in the way of "ending the Cold War."

Never will I get over my amazement at the speed with which this point of view spread from the margin to the mainstream. Within five years, the radical perspective had become the conventional wisdom in the universities, first among the students, then among the converts they made among their craven professors, and even in the end among the administrators who had at first offered a bit of resistance. By 1968, the major media too began toppling like the "dominoes" that were notoriously supposed to fall in Southeast Asia if South Vietnam were to go Communist. Finally the last domino collapsed when the supposedly all-powerful liberal establishment in control of the Democratic party caved in to the radical insurgency.

Only yesterday, the establishment had dismissed the radicals as politically insignificant and had even made fun of them as—in the words of an advisor to Lyndon Johnson—"a bunch of Upper West Side Jacobins." But no longer. Traumatized by the race riots that had broken out in many major American cities, and then by the Tet offensive, which was misinterpreted as a North Vietnamese victory, the liberals had lost their complacent confidence that they knew how to solve America's problems.

With that loss of confidence came a failure of nerve as well. When Johnson announced that he would not seek reelection in 1968, the previously incredible notion of a radical takeover of the Democratic party suddenly became plausible. But it was still a bit too early, and Senator Eugene McCarthy, the candidate behind whom the insurgents mobilized, was not the right man for the job. (In his heart McCarthy knew he was wrong.)

Senator George McGovern was another matter. In *his* heart lay dormant but alive much the same view of American foreign policy he had held when lining up behind the Communist-controlled candidacy of Henry Wallace for president in 1948. To be sure, neither Wallace nor McGovern was a Communist. But both imagined that the Cold War had been started by the United States under Truman, and that if it had been up to the Soviet Union, there would have been a con-

Mr. Podhoretz, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, was for 35 years editor-in-chief of *Commentary* and is now its editor-at-large. His current book is *Ex-Friends*, a memoir.

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tinuation of the warm relations it had enjoyed with the United States in the war against Hitler. Since this was precisely how the radicals of the '60s—like the Communists before them—also read the historical record, McGovern was a natural for them. With a little help from the changes in the nominating process he himself had pushed through, it was behind him that the radicals captured the Democratic party in 1972.

Meanwhile, in the course of its triumphant march through the liberal institutions of America, the radicalism of the early '60s had mutated into a different species of political and cultural animal. Instead of working "within the system" to realize its vision of a perfect America, the Movement had first indicted and then convicted and was now pronouncing a death sentence on the country for failing to live up to the radicals' bizarre and increasingly elastic conception of utopia.

This might have been more frightening than it was if not for the fact that McGovern was defeated as roundly by Richard Nixon as Barry Goldwater had been by Lyndon Johnson. Still, it was frightening enough. For one thing, even after McGovern's repudiation at the polls, the apparatchiks behind him were still in control of the Democratic party. What this spelled was an abandonment of support for the policy of containing Soviet expansion which the Democrats had followed pretty consistently since the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947—and just at the moment when the Soviets were launching the greatest military buildup in peacetime history.

Secondly, to the despair of those old-style anti-Communist Democrats who continued to believe in containment, the Republicans, who had a longstanding habit of speaking loudly and carrying a small stick, were still not stepping into the breach. On the contrary, they were mounting through détente what the old-style Democrats considered precisely the wrong response to the Soviet arms buildup.

McGOVERN AND McGOVERNISM TRIUMPH

McGovern's campaign slogan was "Come Home, America," which everyone interpreted as a call for immediate withdrawal from Vietnam, but was also understood to be hinting more broadly at a new isolationism. This isolationist appeal could not have been more alien to the recent spirit of the Democratic party. Hence the anti-McGovern Democrats who now looked to Senators Henry M. ("Scoop") Jackson and Hubert H. Humphrey for leadership seized upon it as an opening for their own campaign to get their party back onto the Truman-Kennedy-Johnson track.

Playing on McGovern's slogan, they issued a statement entitled "Come Home, Democrats," which served as the basis of a new organization called the Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM). The statement summarized the principles of the postwar Democratic party, both in foreign policy and in domestic affairs. In addition to reaffirming confidence in the strategy of containment and in the need for a strong defense, it included an attack on the new concept of preferential treatment for accredited minorities which McGovern and his people had embraced as a veritably sacred principle. Preferential treatment, it declared, was just as alien to traditional Democratic ideals—in this case, that of equality of opportunity—as McGovern's isolationism. The huge defeat he had suffered was blamed on his departure from those traditions which embodied the point of view of the great mass of Democrats. And indeed, large numbers of disgusted Democrats had sat on their hands on Election Day, while millions of others who had never pulled the Republican lever before voted for Nixon.

Yet for whatever reason, CDM did not succeed in providing these Democrats with the "home" out of which they had been driven by the McGovernites. The organization survived for a fairly long stretch, but it never took off, and its influence was for all practical purposes rendered nil when the decidedly uncharismatic Scoop Jackson (of whom it was once said that if he gave a Roosevelt-type "fireside chat," the fire would go out) lost to Jimmy Carter in the Democratic primaries of 1976.

Thanks to Watergate, the Democrats (even with the McGovernites still calling the shots behind the scenes) were able to stage a comeback, with Carter winning in the general election against Gerald Ford. Carter was not a McGovernite himself. In fact, he had been a hawk on Vietnam. But as president, he still fell so completely into the clutches of the apparatchiks that he could make a speech denouncing "the intellectual and moral poverty" of the policy of containment that had once been his party's chief pride and glory in foreign affairs.

Reagan would not have scored so large a victory if Nixon's 'silent majority' had not become the Reagan Democrats.

Soon, however, another amazing thing happened. In 1976, when Scoop Jackson failed to get a firm grip on the old Democratic banner, it fell back in the dust into which George McGovern had flung it. In 1979, no other Democrat (not even Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, whom I and many others expected to pick up where Jackson had left off) even bothered to stoop down for it. But then, out of nowhere as it seemed, a former Democrat turned Republican came flying by on his mount, bent over, snatched up this tattered ensign, and waved it proudly in the air. Millions of other disillusioned Democrats like himself (many of the founders of CDM among them) rallied around the old colors, and Ronald Reagan rode them all the way to the White House in 1980.

I am not suggesting that Reagan beat Carter because he was the better Democrat. Obviously he won because the conservatism he had espoused since the disastrous Goldwater campaign had become far more acceptable to many more voters than it had been in 1964. But Reagan would not have scored so large a victory if Nixon's "silent majority" in 1972 had not become a new and even more numerous breed now known as Reagan Democrats. And when we consider how uncannily similar Reagan's campaign themes—a tax cut to stimulate the economy, an arms buildup to prevent the Soviets from forging ahead—were to those of John F. Kennedy in 1960, it is no wonder that he made such deep inroads into traditionally Democratic ethnic groups.

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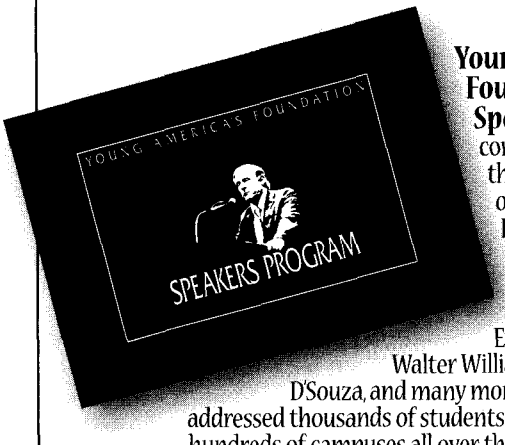

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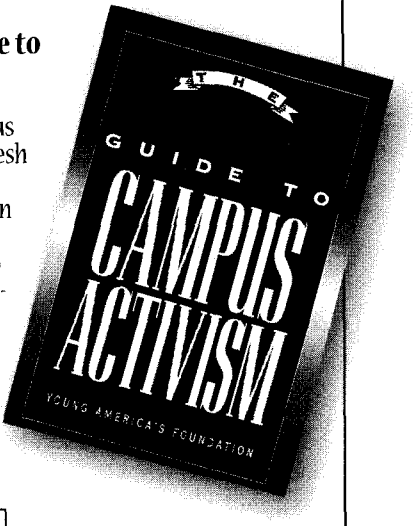

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As for the Democratic party itself, refusing to learn the lesson Reagan had just taught, it continued on its losing ways. Not that it was stupid enough to go on nominating clones of George McGovern. Candidates like Walter Mondale (1984) and Michael Dukakis (1988) were no more to the McGovernite manner born than Jimmy Carter had been. But the grip of the Left on the party was still so tight that no one could capture the Democratic nomination for president who did not kowtow to it.

A DE-McGOVERNIZING WIND BLOWS

Since, however, politicians want to win elections as well as nominations, a rebellion not unlike the old CDM got started under the aegis of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC). An obscure governor of a small southern state named Bill Clinton, who *was* a McGovernite to the manner born but who had figured out that this was a formula for defeat, became the head of the DLC. In due course, presenting himself as a centrist, he graduated to the presidency of the United States.

By now, the Cold War was over, and foreign policy for the first time in decades was taking second place to domestic affairs. But the minute the newly elected Bill Clinton turned his wonkish attention to domestic concerns, he blithely stripped off the centrist mask and revealed the face of the old Adam living on below (with an even more fervent McGovernite Eve standing beside him in the shape of Hillary Rodham Clinton). The DLC understandably felt like so many of the many women in Clinton's life: seduced, used, and then abandoned.

At first, this brazen deceiver, having achieved power by posing as a centrist, pushed hard to the left. But to his evident astonishment, the country pushed back even harder, forcing him to abandon efforts like his campaign to abolish the ban on gays in the military. To top it all off, the old Adam's Eve was driven out of her own little paradise by the flaming sword of public indignation at her high-handed bid to dictate the revamping of the country's entire health-care system.

Not content with having administered these rebuffs, the electorate in 1994 delivered what looked for a spell like a knockout blow to the Clinton administration. Clinton was so stunned by the Republican sweep at every level of government that he beat a prudential retreat. Hillary receded—or was rudely shoved—into the background, practically relegated to baking cookies and other such activities for which she had once expressed an arrogant feminist contempt. For his part, Bill went searching for the mask he had cast aside, fished it out of storage, and quickly put it back on.

Now the old Adam was born yet again as a centrist, and this time it was the turn of the McGovernite liberals to feel betrayed. In January 1996, Clinton, in his State of the Union address, made what may yet turn out to be his most enduring pronouncement as president: "The era of big government is over." It was a breathtaking renunciation of the central tenet not just of McGovernism but of contemporary liberalism as a whole.

Yet Clinton was doing more here than throwing a rhetorical bone to an electorate that had so loudly endorsed this very pronouncement, first by killing off his wife's attempt to prolong the era of big government and make it even bigger, and then by handing both houses of Congress and most of the local jurisdictions to the Republicans. And not just any Republicans: Republicans who professed their faith in the "devolution" of power from Washington to the states and the cities.

Bowing to the voters in action as well as speech, Clinton went on to sign a welfare-reform bill that did precisely what they said they wanted in this area. He also talked tough on crime, muting the standard liberal emphasis on the "root causes" (poverty, joblessness, racism) that had served as an excuse for violence, especially among minority groups, and stressing in its place the need for more cops. In contrast to welfare reform, which was actually put into practice, we have yet to see anywhere near the 100,000 additional cops Clinton promised to put on the streets. Even so, the new rhetoric in itself was a significant step away from the McGovernite worldview.

The DLC understandably felt like so many of the women in Clinton's life: seduced, used, and then abandoned.

Furthermore, convinced as I am that the words spoken by presidents count even when they are not made flesh, I would argue that the slogan Clinton adopted on affirmative action—"mend it, don't end it"—amounted to another step away from McGovernism. Certainly no such words would ever have been uttered by a McGovernite true believer, in whose eyes there is nothing about this policy in need of mending except the minds of its critics. For that matter, not all that many *Republicans* are willing even now to state flat out that there is something, let alone everything, wrong with affirmative action.

All this did not quite make Clinton, as some disgruntled Democrats complained, the most conservative member of their party to sit in the White House since Grover Cleveland. But even if we factor in Clinton's intransigently liberal stance on abortion, we have to balance it with his retreat on other social issues, like gays in the military and same-sex marriage. Then too there is the deference he has paid to the importance of religious faith. No doubt all those photographs of Clinton leaving church with Bible in hand are only for show. Yet the rule of La Rochefoucauld applies here no less than it does to every hypocritical act: Clinton's ostentatious religiosity is an example of the homage vice pays to virtue; and the very need to pay the homage inevitably constitutes an acknowledgment of the power of the virtue.

On the whole, then, Clinton most assuredly stood to the right of where his party had been since 1972. If I were a liberal Democrat who had cut his teeth on the McGovern campaign, I would regard him as a traitor to the cause. And yet, so fearful have these people grown of Hillary's delusional right-wing conspiracy—a term that is their euphemism for the fascists they visualize hiding under every altar—that in 1996 they never even mounted a primary challenge against him from the left. (Neither of Clinton's immediate

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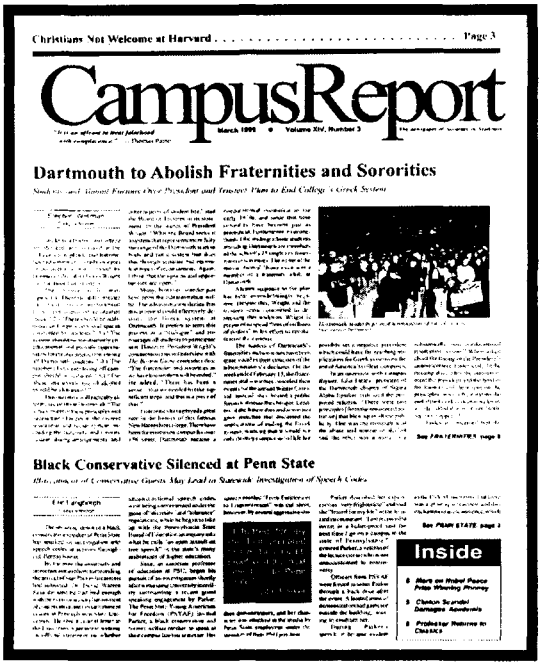
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Democratic predecessors, Carter and Johnson, was given the same free ride.)

Nor did a single Democrat, not even the most liberal, desert Clinton when he was impeached. How could they when they saw him as their only defense against the malign forces waiting to rob them of their rights (beginning with abortion) and also, by turning the whole of America into a new Salem, to take away all their fun? Just as obsessive anti-Semites imagine that the Jews run the world, so these liberals wildly exaggerate the power of the "religious Right." And it is thanks to their paranoia that Clinton has survived.

CLINTON AT WAR

When we shift from domestic to foreign affairs, the transformation Clinton has wrought in the Democratic party becomes even more striking. The late Meg Greenfield of the *Washington Post* once drily observed that it was impossible to tell whether, short of an invasion of San Diego, the Democrats would ever be willing to use military force. As for me, I would have bet large sums of money when Clinton was elected in 1992 that, even if foreign troops landed in San Diego on his watch, he would more likely send Jesse Jackson to negotiate their withdrawal than do the unthinkable by dropping bombs or firing missiles at them. I would also have bet that the same outcome would *a fortiori* result from a crisis abroad. In the meantime, as Jackson was negotiating, whether at home or abroad, Clinton would busy himself with schemes for "saving Social Security" or designing school uniforms.

We now know that I would have lost this bet, though it would not have been a reckless one to make. After all, not only had Clinton been a draft dodger during the Vietnam War, but he had admitted to a loathing for the military in general. He was also at his most McGovernite in concentrating on domestic rather than foreign affairs. Finally, Clinton himself, and many others, interpreted his victory in 1992 over George Bush, who had supposedly paid too much attention to foreign affairs, as a mandate to concentrate mainly on our domestic problems. In line with all this, I expected the Clinton administration to follow through on the full implication of the McGovernite injunction to "come home" by throwing his arms in a great bear hug around an isolationist foreign policy.

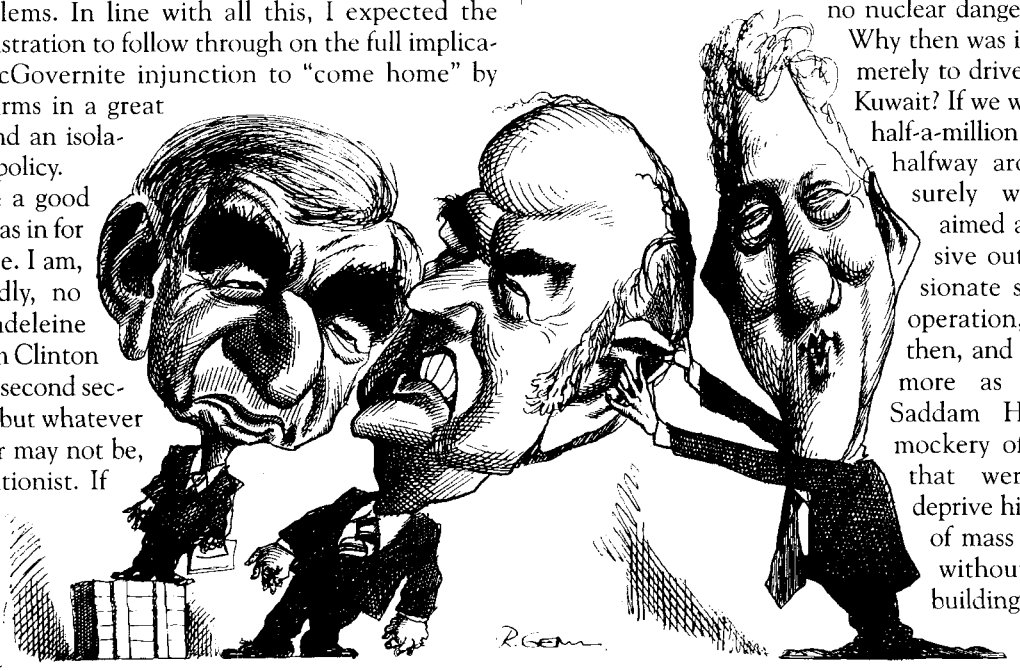
Here, I, like a good many others, was in for another surprise. I am, to put it mildly, no admirer of Madeleine Albright, whom Clinton chose to be his second secretary of state, but whatever else she may or may not be, she is no isolationist. If anything, she might be characterized as a reckless Wilsonian interventionist, always ready to use American force to make the world safe for democracy (or, to adopt currently more fashionable parlance, human rights). And Clinton has been with her at almost every turn.

The most spectacular example is Kosovo. I applauded that intervention while criticizing the decision to confine ourselves to high-altitude bombing and to rule out the introduction of ground troops. I also thought that the entire operation was stupidly executed. The Kosovar Albanians, the very people it was designed to help, became its victims, and then the citizens of Belgrade were punished while Slobodan Milosevic, who was the truly guilty party, got away scot-free and remained in power.

Yet it is only fair to add that the guilty parties in the Gulf War (Saddam Hussein), the Vietnam War (Ho Chi Minh), and the Korean War (Kim Il Sung) all remained in power too. In bringing this up, the point I am trying to make is that, in Kosovo, Clinton was following in the bipartisan footsteps of predecessors from Harry Truman to George Bush by implementing the doctrine of limited war. This doctrine came out of the Korean War which, like every other real war the United States has since fought (and I use the word "real" to exclude such trivial military operations as Grenada and Haiti), had as its objective not victory—for which, as General Douglas MacArthur so famously proclaimed, there is no substitute—but a restoration of the *status quo ante*.

Now, this may have been the right and prudential course in Korea, where there was a reasonable fear that the pursuit of victory (that is, driving the Communists out of the North and unifying the country under, it was hoped, a democratic regime in the South) might lead to a nuclear confrontation. The same justification could have been offered for our policy in Vietnam, though there we ultimately failed to secure even the limited objective we had succeeded in achieving in Korea.

In the Korean War sense, we also succeeded in the Gulf War. But with the Cold War already over in 1991, there was no nuclear danger to worry about. Why then was it deemed enough merely to drive the Iraqis out of Kuwait? If we were going to send half-a-million American troops halfway around the world, surely we should have aimed at a more conclusive outcome. As a passionate supporter of that operation, I thought so then, and I still do—all the more as I sit watching Saddam Hussein make a mockery of the inspections that were supposed to deprive him of the weapons of mass destruction he is without a doubt still building and stockpiling. The war Bill Clinton fought in



Michael Dukakis, George McGovern, and Bill Clinton by Roman Genn

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Kosovo, then, was even less an act of *coitus interruptus* than the war George Bush fought in the Gulf. Clinton deserves to be blamed for a host of misjudgments (beginning with the expectation that Milosevic would give in after two or three days of bombing). But the buck stops there. It was not Clinton who originated the idea of limited war.

Neither was it Clinton who first conceived of using superior American firepower to minimize our own casualties at the expense of the enemy's (including, if militarily necessary or unavoidable, its civilian population). The members of the antiwar movement to which he himself belonged during Vietnam, for example, charged that "the American way of war" was immoral because—I am quoting now from the much admired political philosopher Michael Walzer—it relied on "massive firepower . . . that shifts the burden of war from the soldier . . . to the civilian population."

There was some truth in this. Yet far from being considered immoral by the American military, it was held up as a special glory. Unlike the Chinese or the Russians, the Americans rejected the tactic of deploying "human waves" of expendable troops in battle. Instead, American commanders were trained to do everything they could to minimize their own casualties, and, to that end, never to hesitate in exploiting any and all technological advantages they enjoyed.

Clinton carried this tradition about as far as it could go in Kosovo, but he remained solidly within it. He also emulated Bush in keeping alive the tradition of limited war even after the conditions out of which it had developed no longer existed. Some, I know, imagined (dementedly, in my judgment) that Kosovo presented the danger of triggering World War III. (Reportedly this was what a British general told the American commander there, General Wesley Clark, might happen if he tried to seize the local airport from the Russian troops who had grabbed it; and Clark's wish to do just that is why he was later fired.) But others—more plausibly, if still wrongly—contend that the new conditions of the post–Cold War world provide a substitute justification for limited war.

According to this latter view, the American people would not have tolerated Bush's intervention in the Gulf or Clinton's in Kosovo unless the two operations had international or multilateral cover—the U.N. in the former and NATO in the latter. But no such cover, the argument continues, could have been obtained by any more ambitious aims than were pursued. To this it is added that the same imperative of minimizing American casualties that is binding on the military also ruled out going to Baghdad at the end of the Gulf War, or sending ground troops into Kosovo.

Perhaps. But the main reason Bush called off the Gulf War when he did was to minimize not American but Iraqi casualties. It was, in other words, to spare our tender sensibilities from the sight on CNN of the elite Iraqi Republican Guard being slaughtered as it was hustling back home on the road to Baghdad.

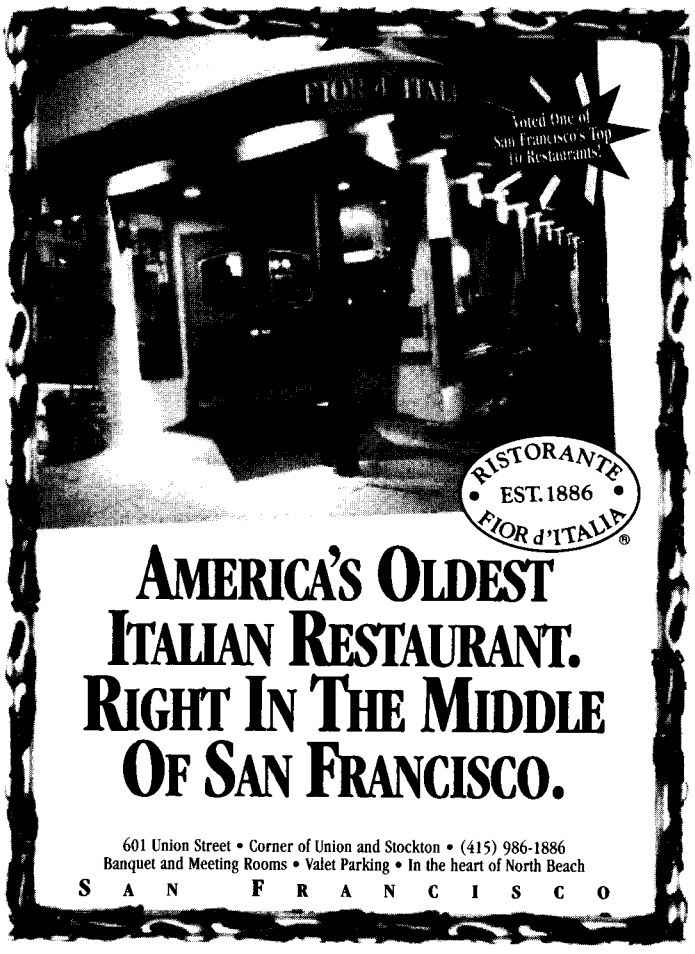
As for American casualties, there is a difference between keeping them to a minimum and keeping them to zero. No one has yet proved that the American people would have demanded that we cut and run even if the opponents of taking on Saddam Hussein had proved right about those thousands of "body bags" they so confidently predicted would be shipped home from the Gulf if we went to war there. Nor can we be sure that going to Baghdad would have resulted in as many American casualties as the hold-back brigade within the Bush administration has always maintained. A similar observation can be made about ground troops in Kosovo.

A PARTY RESTORED?

But again, having stipulated that Clinton and his team used force badly and made a lot of stupid mistakes, I want to underline what is to my mind a much more important point: namely, that as president, this former draft-dodging McGovernite has repeatedly been willing both to leave "home" and to employ military force, and that in doing so he has carried the Democratic party with him.

Cheering from the sidelines, moreover, have been many of the same liberals who were most vituperative in their opposition both to Vietnam in particular and to anything and everything military in general. Let the *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis stand in for the rest of his unlovely tribe. During Vietnam, Lewis denounced this country as the terror of the earth, but lately his only criticism of Clinton has been for not taking up arms soon enough in Bosnia or fighting hard enough in Kosovo.

It has been observed a hundred times by now that the only reason the liberals (and presumably Clinton himself) have backed the use of force in these places is that they cannot detect any American interests that are being served there. So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long as we are engaged in "humanitarian intervention," or are fighting for human rights, they are as gung-ho as can be. But the minute they spot an advantage to the United States—as they did in the oil fields of the Middle East during the debates over whether we should go to war against Saddam Hussein—the war becomes impure and unworthy of their support.

This too I am perfectly ready to stipulate, but with three qualifications. First, I think the United States *does* have an interest in the stability of the European continent, and that the liberals are mistaken in their view that our intervention in the Balkans is purely humanitarian. But second, I would be less than honest if I neglected to confess that I myself consider it no bad thing for the United States to assert through its bombs that sovereignty should no longer be presumed to include the right of a ruler to butcher his own people. And third, I also recognize that in his newfound readiness to make war as well as love, Clinton (along with his liberal amen corner) is caught up in a worldwide trend among parties of the Left. Even former pacifists like those now in power in Germany joined the NATO operation in Kosovo; and if they have been less bellicose than Clinton, the Labor prime minister Tony Blair of England has been more.

Be all that as it may, the fact remains that Bill Clinton, both in domestic and foreign affairs, has at long last done what those who founded the Coalition for a Democratic Majority more than a quarter-of-a-century ago were unable to bring about: He has all but de-McGovernized the Democratic party. Of course, the process is still a goodly distance from completion. In the domestic arena, to cite only one piece of unfinished business, completion would require a return to the ideal of equality of opportunity rather than equality of results, and this is almost certainly not going to happen. But then again, judging from the statements of George W. Bush, preferential treatment for accredited minorities has no better chance of being abolished under the Republicans either—not any time soon.

In foreign policy, full de-McGovernization would entail rebuilding instead of gutting the military forces whose actual deployment the very process of de-McGovernization itself has already legitimized. I suspect that this, as opposed to what can be confidently predicted with regard to affirmative action, will actually occur. Probably it will start under a Republican president, but de-McGovernization has by now gone so far in this field that beefing up the military will not encounter anywhere near the amount of Democratic resistance it would have provoked in the past. (Any serious effort to build a defense against missiles, however, is likely to be another story.)

Two final questions. First, will the Democrats remain de-McGovernized after Clinton leaves office? My guess is that the answer is yes, whether the party's candidate in 2000 turns out to be Al Gore or Bill Bradley. Of course, if there were a serious economic crisis, the Democrats would quickly forget that "the era of big government is over." They would start calling loudly for its return (not that it has actually disappeared under Clinton—which, however, to say it yet again, does not mean that the words themselves were of no account).

But even if the Democrats were to identify themselves once more with big government, they would not be re-McGovernizing their party. No more than Clinton invented the concept of limited war did George McGovern make the Democrats the party of big government. On this issue (unlike the Cold War), the McGovernites were not abandoning the central tradition of their party, and were no different from Jackson or Humphrey or any of their other internal opponents. In other words, in maintaining that Clinton has de-McGovernized the Democrats, I am not saying that he has turned them into a simulacrum of the Republican Right. No matter how many Republican ideas he may have co-opted and forced Democrats to swallow, they remain Democrats—and so does he—on issues like tax cuts, entitlements, and how to "fix" Social Security and Medicare.

But what about foreign affairs? Here, as on the question of increased military spending, I think the Democrats have been pretty thoroughly purged of the McGovernite spirit. It pains to me to admit this, but I would estimate that there is now more isolationist sentiment in Republican than in Democratic ranks.

Bill Clinton is a scoundrel and a perjurer and a disgrace to the office he has held. Yet it is this scoundrel, this perjurer, this disgrace to the presidency of the United States who has pushed and pulled his party into moving in a healthier direction than it had been heading in since its unconditional surrender to the Left nearly thirty years ago. As if this were not extraordinary enough in itself, the explanation for it can be found in the very defects of Clinton's character I have just listed.

In my experience, very few politicians have solid principles that they are unwilling to sell out for the sake of winning elections. They are, most of them, "the hollow men, the stuffed men" of whom T. S. Eliot wrote, and in Clinton we have perhaps as extreme an embodiment of this professional deformation as can be unearthed. If he had been a man of any principles at all, a man with something inside him besides the lust for power (and the other lusts that power contributes to satisfying), he would have been incapable of betraying the people and the ideas he was supposed to represent. If he had not been so great a liar, he would have been unable to get away not only with his own private sins but with the political insults he was administering to some of his core constituencies. And if he had not been such a disgrace to the presidency, he would not have been impeached, and would not thereby have forced even the intransigent McGovernites of his party, who had every reason to hate him, into mobilizing on his behalf for fear of the right-wing conspiracy they fantasied would succeed him.

And so, through a kind of political and psychological jiu-jitsu, it came to pass that Clinton's worst qualities were precisely what enabled him to accomplish something good. Scoop Jackson, the man CDM dreamed of seeing in the White House, was a political saint by comparison with Bill Clinton. Which may well mean that he could never have done as much to de-McGovernize the Democratic party as Clinton has managed to do.

A minute ago, I borrowed a quotation from T. S. Eliot in trying to delineate Clinton's political character. But Eliot also wrote something else that so well sums up why and how Clinton has changed the Democratic party that I cannot resist ending with it: "The last temptation is the greatest treason:/To do the right deed for the wrong reason." **NR**

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FROM THE DESK OF GEORGE W. BUSH

Dear Mom and Dad,
Little help over here. Please pick by number. Gracias!

1. I made some mistakes in the past. I've learned from my mistakes. And I've moved on. And the American people are ready to move on, as well. Move on from the politics of personal attack and smear, move on from digging into people's pasts. I'm ready to run a vigorous, fair, positive campaign, and I hope you'll help me do that.

(Seems right. But how long can I keep saying it?)

2. I made some mistakes in the past. I got high once. Once! One time, back in the hippie days. I just did it to freak Dad out, but turns out he kind of rolled with it. Said "sounds like a couple of strong martoonis," which in a way is right on the money. So c'mon. At least I admit that I inhaled.

(Kinda fun. Like I'm not taking it too seriously. Okay with you, Dad?)

3. I made some mistakes in the past. I've learned from my mistakes. But I don't want to get into the specifics of what I did and when. Suffice it to say that I was kind of a lost soul before I met my beautiful wife. She gave me direction and support and has been my rock for as long as we've been married. Let's give her a big hand! Honey, you want to come out and take a bow? Maybe say a few words? Let's give it up, ladies and gentlemen!

(Do a "Limited Hillary." Whaddya think, Mom?)

4. I made some mistakes in the past. I've learned from my mistakes. And I've got 40 million bucks just itching to talk about Steve's dad, Red Cross fundraising irregularities, the Buddhist-temple thing, and no controlling legal authority. You want a piece of me? You want to take a shot at me? Well, I got some advice for you. You take a shot at me, you better kill me. 'Cause I've got 45 million bones (I just made five in the time it's taken me to say this sentence. Actually, make that ten. This one has taken longer than I thought) ready, willing, and able to go negative hard, fast, furious, and unrelenting. If you think you can keep up with that, go for it.

(Kinda my favorite. Took out the "F" words, though. Think I should put 'em back?)

5. I made some mistakes in the past. And I've learned from my mistakes. Never tried to rape a gal, though. Never groped a gal who wasn't my wife. Never touched an intern. Never raised money illegally and then lied about it. Next question.

(I like this one too. Reminds me of Lee Atwater.)

6. I made some mistakes. I've learned from my mistakes. There were activities in the past—I'm not entirely clear on the dates, I'm working on that—that I'm sure were perfectly legal at the time that I might have engaged in when in fact I didn't have the information—and we're trying to get you the information you need, sooner rather than later, more rather than less—needed to really define—and isn't it interesting that these things are coming up now, right when I'm trying to talk about education and renewal? I mean, it isn't a coincidence, is it? Some people just don't like change, even positive change, and they'll do anything to stop it. I mean, this is an old story. We've been through it and through it and the American people, quite frankly, are sick of it.

7. Here's what we're talking about: some grass, a little coke in the disco days, maybe some Ecstasy once, when it first hit Houston. I mean, people! Come on! Hello?? Can't we all just get beyond this? Next question, pull-eeezz!

George

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HELP

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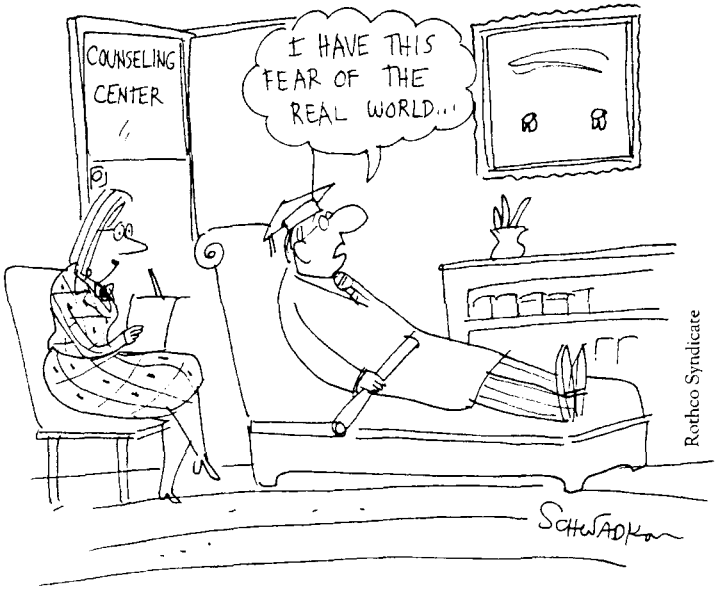
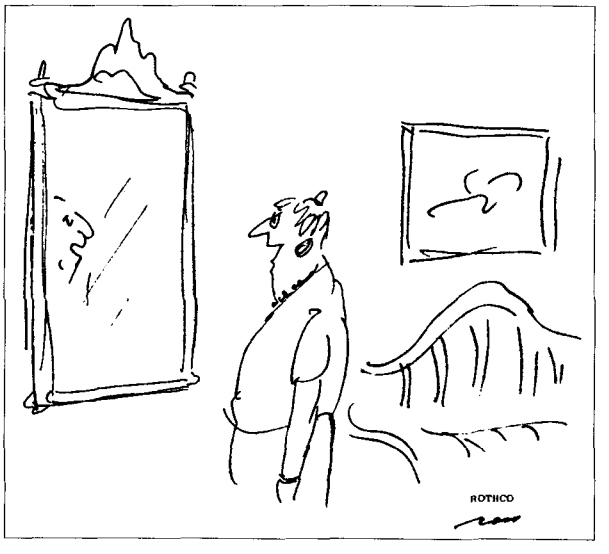
GRACE UNDER FIRE

If W. can keep his head
(The answer's up for grabs)
While weaving like a heavyweight
And getting in some jabs,
He may move on from Austin to
Do Pennsylvania Avenue,
But from my sour point of view,
He doesn't have the abs.

—W. H. VON DREELE





"Early Chippendale on the wall, who has the best antiques of them all?"

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Weekend Warrior

H. R. MCMASTER

Vietnam: The Necessary War, by Michael Lind (Free Press, 336 pp., $25)

EVEN now, the legacy of America's war in Vietnam remains uncertain. Of those Americans who were of age in the 1960s and '70s, many chose to serve in the armed forces. Others preferred to avoid the hardship, risks, and sacrifices of war. The misdirected ire of those who opposed the war toward those who did their duty, under challenging and difficult conditions, inspired a sense of betrayal among veterans. This has made reconciliation elusive.

The shadow of Vietnam likewise hangs over contemporary foreign-policy debates and decisions involving the use of military force. We continue to debate the causes of the war, its nature, what went wrong, and what we might learn from it. Only in recent years has enough of the historical record become available to permit accurate and comprehensive answers to such questions. Revelations based on new evidence, including tapes of telephone conversations and meetings among high officials, have challenged much of what was conventional wisdom on the subject.

Michael Lind, who is Washington editor of *Harper's*, has produced a radical reinterpretation of the war in Southeast Asia. According to him, Americans have misunderstood Vietnam and have learned the wrong lessons from it. In *Vietnam: The Necessary War*, Lind argues that "it was necessary for the United States to escalate the war in the mid 1960s in order to defend the credibility of the United States as a superpower"; but "it was necessary for the United States to forfeit the war after 1968, in order to preserve the American domestic political consensus in favor of the Cold War on other fronts." To his credit, Lind casts many of the controversial issues of the Vietnam War in a provocative light. But the author's lack of research and shallow understanding of the historical record lead him to flawed conclusions.

United States Air Force

An American CH-47 Chinook coming in for a landing

Claiming to "set the historical record straight," Lind is correct in his observation that many misleading and dogmatic books have been published about Vietnam. The early literature was fraught with emotion and based largely on conjecture. Memoirs by those involved with planning the struggle, such as Robert McNamara's *In Retrospect*, have tended to be selective in the evidence they present, with a propensity to manipulate history consistently with the author's predilections. Lind goes too far, however, in his assertion that "almost everything written by Americans about the Vietnam War in the past quarter century has conformed to one of the three scripts of radical leftism, anti–Cold War liberalism, or conservatism." He often misrepresents or caricatures a book's main arguments to fit his own pre-constructed categories or bolster his assertions. The works of historians such as George Herring, William Conrad Gibbons, Michael Hunt, and Lloyd Gardner do not even appear in his notes. Because he did not conduct primary research, his critiques often amount to little more than assertions.

Lind argues that, owing to the "Cold War grand strategy of global military containment of the Communist bloc," an American war in Vietnam was "unavoidable." He stresses the need at the time to preserve America's credibility and "the basis of its rank in the regional and global hierarchy." That need left American policymakers with no alternative to war. Lind's argument stems from his determination to offer a "centrist perspective more sympathetic to American Cold War policymakers than that of their critics on the left and right." Evidence now available shows that the imperative to contain Communism was indeed an important factor in Vietnam policy but did not make inevitable either American entry into the war or the manner in which the war was conducted.

In his determination to sympathize

Mr. McMaster, a former professor of history at the U.S. Military Academy, is author of *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam.*

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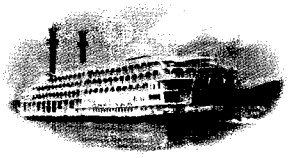

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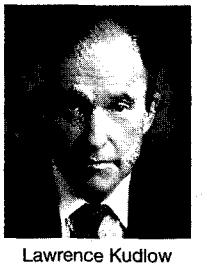
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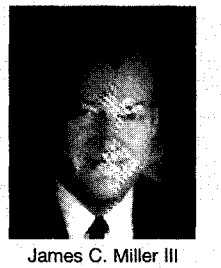
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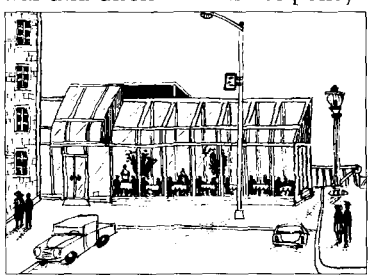
with American military planners, Lind overlooks the Johnson administration's lies and deceptions. These set the stage for an American war in Vietnam. As early as May 1964, LBJ understood that the situation in Vietnam demanded a difficult choice between war and disengagement. Motivated by short-term expediency, however, Johnson refused to make that decision. He feared that doing so would alienate key constituencies on which the success of his domestic priorities (the 1964 election and the 1965 Great Society legislation) depended. He thus pursued a middle course in Vietnam. This meant gradually escalating the military effort while pledging "no wider war" and promising not to send "American boys" to Southeast Asia. As American involvement deepened, the gap between the truth about what was going on and Johnson's depiction of it to the public widened. In 1965 Americans found themselves at war, without ever having made a clear decision to enter such a conflict. LBJ's behavior was not only undemocratic, but also removed an important corrective to what was an unwise policy.



Lind, however, feels that, in matters of war, the people should grant effective carte blanche to one leader: the president. Thus Lind depicts the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin resolution as a model for future "conditional declarations of war." With such permissive legislation in his pocket, the president could coerce potential enemies with the prospect of war. If coercion failed, he could simply take military action on his own authority. In this scenario, there would be no democratic debate over the most momentous decisions a nation can face, those involving life and death.

Lind goes on to argue that merely preserving national credibility can provide the necessary justification for going to war. This is so even in the absence of a commitment to achieving tangible goals or producing an outcome consistent with clearly defined American interests. Lind's thinking is identical to that of certain members of LBJ's administration. Planning the gradual escalation of the Vietnam War, they recognized that the United States could not guarantee the freedom and independence of South Vietnam without a much larger military effort than the president would consider or the American people would support. Rather than acknowledge the futility of fighting a war under these conditions, Defense Department planners concluded that it would be better to fight in Vietnam and lose than to pursue a negotiated withdrawal. In March 1965, two months after the U.S. had begun bombing North Vietnam and one month after the first ground combat units landed in South Vietnam, John McNaughton, a

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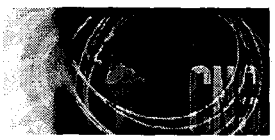

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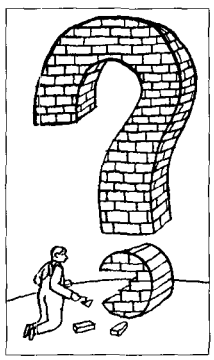
Harvard Law School professor turned war planner, wrote that all the United States had to do was "get bloodied" and "hurt" Vietnamese Communist forces. This would demonstrate the "lengths to which [the] United States will go to fulfill its commitments." According to Lind, McNaughton's thinking should underpin contemporary policy and future American wars. It remains unclear, though, how lost wars, regardless of the numbers of casualties suffered, enhance a nation's prestige.

For Lind, fighting and dying are ends in themselves. He argues that American soldiers "should be thought of as the equivalent of firemen" and "must learn to swim in quagmires." He proposes that Americans expend lives like currency and compares war to "an art auction, which is, among other things, a competition among the rich for prestige. The fact that one stops bidding for a painting when its price reaches $9,000 does not mean that the painting was worthless all along; it merely means that one has reached the limit imposed by one's budget." Pursuing this metaphor, he insists that "even if one is outbid at an auction, one may have achieved the primary purpose of impressing observers with the fact that one is rich."

Such reasoning stems in part from Lind's simplistic understanding of why America lost the Vietnam War. He argues that had the U.S. military better controlled the "American body count" in Vietnam, a lost war in Southeast Asia would really have been a "partial success" in that it "preserv[ed] America's external credibility and its domestic consensus." Lind asserts that tactics emphasizing pacification and population security would have been less costly and would have "cut off the recruits and supplies flowing to the Viet Cong from the villages in South Vietnam's densely populated coastline." Without support, Lind argues that such a strategy, "emphasizing pacification in the earlier years of the war, would have required fewer United States troops."



The Joint Chiefs of Staff knew as early as 1964, however, that a strategy designed to secure the population in the South and isolate the Viet Cong from North Vietnamese support would require over 500,000 troops. Perhaps the most glaring oversight here is Lind's failure to consider fully the complexity of the Vietnamese Communist strategy, a strategy that shifted emphasis in time and place, between political action, guerrilla action, and conventional military effort.

The situation in Vietnam demanded a sophisticated counter-strategy that incorporated real political and economic reform, improvements in the effectiveness of the South Vietnamese government and armed forces, population security, isolation of Vietnamese Communist forces from their sources of supply in the North and South, and a robust conventional military capability. Moreover, guaranteeing the freedom and independence of South Vietnam demanded a large presence of American soldiers and a sustained economic effort over a span of years.

Lind fails to see that the principal problem in our conduct of the war was the sheer absence of a strategy.

Debating what strategy might have worked, however, is largely irrelevant because Americans would not support such a large, protracted commitment of men and treasure. Instead of developing a military strategy to achieve policy goals and committing forces necessary to carry out that strategy, Lyndon Johnson determined the level of military force that was politically palatable in the short term, made that force available to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and instructed them to "kill more Viet Cong." Lind fails to see that the principal problem in our conduct of the war was the sheer absence of a strategy.

Perhaps most significant, Lind neglects the human dimensions of war. Like Robert McNamara and his Pentagon "whiz kids," Lind overlooks the unpredictable psychology of armed conflict. In war, the course of events and losses to enemy action depend in large measure on enemy reactions and initiatives that are difficult to predict and impossible to control. Involving as it does the terror of killing and of death, war demands that soldiers, airmen, marines, and sailors understand how their risks and sacrifices contribute to the achievement of some concrete goal. Americans will not tolerate the loss of life if they do not understand how national interests justify it.

Lind's tendency to generalize and his failure to base his arguments on evidence limit this book's value. He argues, for example, that regional difference produced "northern doves" and "southern hawks" in Congress. Yet he neglects to examine the role of party politics and other factors that influence political decisions and public opinion.

Lind titles the conclusion of his book "The Genuine Lessons of Vietnam." But if history is to inform contemporary policy, as Lind would like it to do, we must become familiar with the historical record and remain sensitive to the complexity and uniqueness of human events and experiences. A flawed understanding of history applied as a prescription for the future is, perhaps, more dangerous than ignoring the past altogether. That is the "genuine lesson" of Lind's book. **NR**

Hot Stuff

KENNETH GREEN

Greenhouse: The 200-Year Story of Global Warming, by Gale E. Christianson (Walker, 305 pp., $25)

"HOT enough for you?" So went the panting title of a recent *New York Times* column on global warming. The hot summer of 1999, following the hot summers of 1998 and 1997, has got lots of folks talking about how hot it is, as well as about what certain other folks must have done to bring on this heat. Of course, 1998's high temperatures were caused primarily by El Niño. As for the present scorching summer, even a heat wave lasting ten years wouldn't mean a whole lot in the context of a climate record of 4 billion years. But that doesn't

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stop doomsayers like Vice President Gore from intimating that recent heat waves are harbingers of still more intense heat waves to come, the heating trend in general being the result of human activities.

Some conservatives would have us ignore it, but the truth is that the home planet does indeed seem to be warming up a bit. Over the past 100 years, the global average temperature has risen by about one degree centigrade, although this warming has not been uniform in chronology or distribution. More of the warming has been over land than over water, more at night than during the day, and more in winter than in summer. But *why* is it getting warmer? That is the question of the hour.

This book, by science historian Gale Christianson, offers an answer by reviewing the history of industrialization and fuel use over the past two centuries. The book is well written and rich in detail, full of fascinating stories about figures from science, technology, and industry. Christianson's exposition of the lives and labors of such great scientists as Fourier, Arrhenius, Darwin, and Lyell are particularly enthralling.

But *Greenhouse*, like other populist writings on climate change, works backwards from an assumption that human activities must have been the principal cause of recent warming. Like many others, Christianson relies on a simple correlation of industrial development with climate change. Such a correlation says nothing about causation, but Christianson brushes over this fact—a big mistake: A simple (and imperfect) correlation of industrialization and industrial pollution with still-rough estimates of climate change omits so many of the complexities of climate as to render the observation virtually meaningless.

What's omitted? Well, the sun, for one thing, and clouds, for another. Though Christianson barely mentions it, fluctuations in solar output may be responsible for 40 percent of the net warming that scientists have estimated since 1850. Meanwhile, changes in the quantity and reflectivity of the earth's cloud cover may have offset half or more of whatever warming effect humanity's release of greenhouse gases may have caused. Aerosols released by volcanoes may have canceled out another 18 percent of the estimated human-warming impact. In other words, much of the warming that mankind might have produced was probably offset by these independent factors. So the question remains: Why does it seem to be getting hotter around here?

James Hansen, lauded by Christianson as a heroic pioneer in the study of climate change, acknowledges in his 1998 article "Climate Forcings in the Industrial Era" that "the forcings that drive long-term climate change are not known with an accuracy sufficient to define future climate change." "Forcings" are the various factors that contribute to heating or cooling, including solar fluctuations, greenhouse gases, changes in cloud reflectivity, and so on.

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Human effects on the climate have often been considered as though every single one edged the temperature upward.

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In fact, the most recent of Hansen's findings neatly refute the scary, guilt-inducing prophecies of Al Gore et al. Human effects on the climate have often been considered as though they all led in one—needless to say, harmful—direction: as though every single one edged the temperature upward. Yet common sense suggests that any human actions that might affect the climate—being undirected by any master plan or conspiracy—would be as likely to cancel each other out as they would to add up to mischief. Indeed, as Hansen acknowledged last year, 78 percent of the warming potential of the "well-mixed greenhouse gases" released by industry since 1850 have been offset by cooling potentials from tropospheric aerosols,

Mr. Green, director of the environmental program at the Reason Public Policy Institute in Los Angeles, is author of *A Plain English Guide to the Science of Climate Change*.

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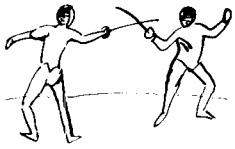
human-produced cloud changes, vegetation and land-use changes, and changes in stratospheric ozone concentration. Curiously, Christianson ignores Hansen's recent work. Instead he focuses on the scientist's earlier congressional testimony, even giving us a photograph of Hansen to gaze upon.

Of course, environmentalists rightly point out that many of mankind's activities that have had a cooling effect have been forms of pollution. Several of these have been sharply reduced by laws against sulfur pollution and ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons. Human activity is thus now actually being regulated so as to produce a net warming effect. Still, in order to cool the earth, few would argue that we should go back to producing sulfuric-acid clouds. (Admittedly, in an environmental context, there is a depressing tendency among conservatives to favor anything that liberals oppose: Climate change? Bring it on! Acid rain? It's good for the soil!) On the other hand, some might well suggest that if human beings can unintentionally offset global warming, perhaps they could do so intentionally as well—through changes in forestry, agricultural practices, and so on. Hence the demand of environmentalists to do something, virtually anything, and right away, to halt the warming trend.



A more sober approach seeks to delay government regulatory action until we fully understand what's causing global warming. Is this just a waste of precious time? "Better safe than sorry!" is the oft-sung refrain of environmentalists. But "Look before you leap" may be a wiser guiding principle in a world beset by many risks, where every regulation may potentially have irreversible unintended consequences.

The question of causation does indeed matter because one thing is certain: Global warming has many causes. Understanding the relative importance of each of them will allow us to prioritize our responses. It will also let us make the best use of our resources in addressing the problem—whether we ultimately do so by acting preemptively, heading off global warming at the pass, or by adapting after the fact to the undesirable effects of climate change. What response we choose is crucial for an additional reason about which Christianson's book is silent—namely the benefits of living in an industrialized society. Though you'd never know it from this book, developed countries have the longest life expectancies, the highest standard of living, and the greatest resources available to preserve and protect their environments.

So yes, the earth seems to be warming, and, yes, the history of climate change makes for a fascinating story. But a selective account of "what happened"—of the climate changing while society industrialized —tells us very little about *why* it all happened, and what to do now that it has. Historians like Gale Christianson like to remind us that those who forget the lessons of the past may be doomed to repeat its worst aspects. What they don't often talk about is the danger of learning spurious lessons from a history imperfectly related. **NR**

To Your Health!

JACOB SULLUM

The Nazi War on Cancer, by Robert N. Proctor (Princeton, 380 pp., $29.95)

THE title of this volume incorporates the words Nazi, war, and cancer. It's hard to get more serious than that. Yet Robert Proctor's book has been treated in certain quarters as something of a sick joke. It is easy to caricature this work, based on quotes taken out of context and promotional material emphasizing "the flip side of fascism," as an attempt to show that the Nazis weren't so bad after all: Despite their unfortunate genocidal tendencies, they were remarkably "progressive" and "socially responsible" in matters of public health.

But Proctor, a historian of science at Pennsylvania State University whose previous work includes a detailed examination of Nazi medical atrocities, is more subtle than that. He makes it clear at the outset that his intent is not to mitigate the horrors of Hitler's regime but to explore its complexity. He draws on a wealth of documents, illustrations, and biographical information to show that in some areas Nazi ideology not only permitted but actively encouraged good science, and what he takes to be good public policy based on it.

Thus, "it was in Germany in the late 1930s that we first find a broad medical recognition of both the addictive nature of tobacco and the lung cancer hazard of smoking. . . . The Nazi regime launched

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As one Hitler Youth health manual put it, 'Nutrition is not a private matter!'

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an ambitious antismoking campaign, involving extensive public health education, bans on certain forms of advertising, and restrictions on smoking in many public places." Hitler himself detested tobacco, which he called "the wrath of the Red Man against the White Man, vengeance for having been given hard liquor." But the antismoking campaign reflected "a national political climate stressing the virtues of racial hygiene and bodily purity" as well as the Führer's personal prejudices. The same could be said of Nazi efforts to discourage drinking and encourage a better diet.

While Proctor provocatively emphasizes that "public health initiatives were pursued not just *in spite of* fascism, but also *in consequence of* fascism" (his italics), he shies away from exploring the evident common ground shared by fascism and the ideology of "public health." He is right to reject the unthinking equation of public-health activism with Nazism, including the use of epithets such as "NicoNazis" and "health fascists" (though he fails to note that such rhetoric is also common among tobacco's opponents, who liken cigarette makers to the Nazis and speak of "the tobaccoism holocaust"). But he is too quick to dismiss the totalitarian implica-

Mr. Sullum, a senior editor at *Reason* magazine, is author of *For Your Own Good: The Anti-Smoking Crusade and the Tyranny of Public Health.*

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tions of a government commitment to minimize morbidity and mortality.

Part of the problem is Proctor's failure to distinguish between protecting people from external threats, such as disease carriers or environmental toxins, and protecting people from their own risky habits, such as smoking, drinking, sloth, and gluttony. The Nazis were indeed ahead of their time in viewing the latter sort of health hazard as a legitimate concern of government, but this is hardly surprising, given their disregard for individual freedom. As Proctor notes in connection with Nazi food propaganda, "the liberal distinction between public and private spheres was abandoned. As one Hitler Youth health manual put it, 'Nutrition is not a private matter!' The body of the German citizen, after all, was supposed to be the material property of the German state. . . . The state thereby acquired a stake in the maintenance of the individual body."

American statists echo this idea of "health as a duty" when they argue that the government should discourage risky behavior because it saps the nation's productivity and drains the public treasury. Taxpayer-funded health care, another area where the Germans, not coincidentally, were remarkably "progressive," has become a pretext for a wide variety of limits on personal freedom, including alcohol and tobacco taxes, advertising restrictions, and laws requiring people to use seat belts and motorcycle helmets. As Faith T. Fitzgerald, a professor at the University of California, Davis, Medical Center, observed in *The New England Journal of Medicine* a few years ago, "Both health care providers and the commonweal now have a vested interest in certain forms of behavior, previously considered a person's private business, if the behavior impairs a person's 'health.' Certain failures of self-care have become, in a sense, crimes against society, because society has to pay for their consequences. . . . In effect, we have said that people owe it to society to stop misbehaving."

Proctor does not seem disturbed by this development. Nor does he question the assumption that the government should protect "the public health" from individuals who choose to trade longevity for pleasure. Yet surely that collectivist imperative helps explain why public-health goals meshed so well with Nazism. As Proctor notes, "the ideology of prevention merged with the ideology of 'one for all and all for one' (*Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz*) that was yet another hallmark of Nazi thought: as one anti-tobacco activist put it, nicotine damages not just the individual but the population as a whole."

Compare this with contemporary public-health doctrine, as summed up by no less an authority than former surgeon general C. Everett Koop: "The government has a perfect right to influence personal behavior to the best of its ability if it is for the welfare of the individual and the community as a whole." This principle gives the government the authority to judge "the welfare of the individual" and elevates "the community as a whole" above individuals.

Having set out to solve the puzzle of enlightened, scientifically grounded policies under an evil regime, Proctor is at pains not to taint public health by its association with the Nazis. "Movements can be disengaged from their ideological support strings," he insists, "however important those strings may be at any given time in history." True enough—but the public-health movement would be worrisome even if the Nazis had taken no interest in it at all. **NR**

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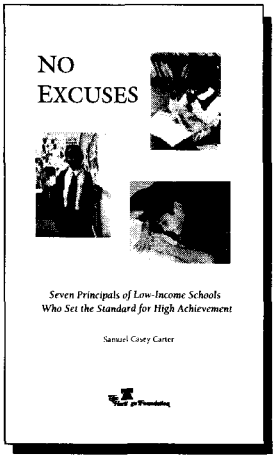
The Wall Street Journal, June 1, 1999

NO EXCUSES

Seven Principals of Low-Income Schools Who Set the Standard for High Achievement

By Samuel Casey Carter



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■ TELEVISION ■

Dressed To Kill

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

TOUGH chicks are in. Check out a poster for Nickleodeon on New York City telephone kiosks, which portrays the cable channel's ideal viewer: A young girl with straight hair and big glasses, she "rides a unicycle . . . [and] picked out the family computer." The clincher? She "can belch on command." A Little Woman no longer, this girl has arrived in Boys' Town, where she will, so the new stereotype goes, beat the guys at their own games: sports, computers, coarseness, and, it would seem from a clutch of TV shows, killing.

Of course, dramas about lethal ladies are nothing new. Just ask Hamlet's father. But those earlier murderous models were mere freelancers. The new bunch are organized, trained, and are probably, in some not so subliminal way, advertisements for women in the military. Sigourney Weaver, battling monsters in the four *Alien* movies, was a prototype. Since then, her character, Ripley, has been joined by an entire regiment. There's Captain Kathryn Janeway of *Star Trek: Voyager*, ably assisted by Amazons such as the USA Network's *La Femme Nikita* (secret agent, kills people) and WB's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (high-school senior, kills dead people). Interestingly, the violence on offer is often very hands-on. These women are not afraid of a good brawl. There is plenty of fistfighting, kick boxing, and, in Buffy's case, staking through the heart.

But if they took on Xena, the Warrior Princess, they would be crushed. Of all the rough girls, Xena is the roughest. Madeleine Albright claims to have adopted her as a role model—clearly without much success. Xena would have chopped up Saddam and Slobodan years ago. At times the show has been television's highest-rated first-run syndicated drama (which means it would have been watched in about 5 million households). Now beginning its fifth season, it has spawned a Xenaverse of websites, fan fiction, conventions, and Xenarabilia.

Played by Lucy Lawless, a former Miss New Zealand, Xena began life as a character in an episode of another syndicated series, *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys*. In the space of one hour, she killed six people, was referred to as a "murdering harlot," seduced Hercules' friend Iolaus, and ended up being awarded her own TV show. *Xena* itself is set in some vaguely classical past, with appearances by Greek gods, centaurs, and Prometheus, but with a time line so wobbly that it would embarrass Johnnie Cochran. As befits a TV heroine in an age with only the vaguest grasp of history, Xena, a person with a presumably normal life span, is at the siege of Troy, finds Moses' tablets of stone, helps David kill Goliath, has sex with Julius Caesar, and runs into the Knights of the Round Table. Widely traveled for a woman from the time of the trireme, Xena even manages to reach China, and, disastrously, India. (A Hindu group complained that, among other offenses, a "snide" warrior princess treated Krishna "in an extremely condescending manner": The episode was later pulled from rebroadcast.)

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The weaker sex, men, are either feeble, needing Xena's help, or wicked, en route to a drubbing from her.

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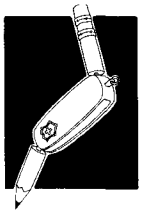

Through it all—clad, as the statuesque and nearly 6-foot tall Miss Lawless once put it, in a "corset and a whip"—Xena manages to rout all comers. She will use weapons, notably a sharp-edged discus called a chakram. Her favorite approach, however, is a punch-up, generally heralded by somersaults and a war cry of "yi yi yi."

The weaker sex, men, are either feeble, needing Xena's help, or wicked, en route to a drubbing from her. The only man in Xena's regular entourage is a ludicrous, Jar Jar Binks-like figure, Joxer the Mighty. His main function is to wear a stupid hat and to be periodically humiliated. Even Hercules seems a little effete when compared with a heroine who, in one memorable episode, kills a rat with her teeth and then (while still bound in chains) uses the dead rodent as a sort of missile.

In matters of the heart, the male sex likewise comes off as second best. For, it is implied, Xena has given her love to her trusty traveling companion Gabrielle—a petite blonde, girly, certainly, but still someone you'd want to avoid tangling with in hand-to-hand combat. The romance between the two is never explicit. It is, fans like to say, a "subtext." Sub? Episodes of *Xena* feature enough smoldering looks, "sisterly" kisses, and bathtub scenes to bring a smile even to the grim features of the late Mrs. Roosevelt.

She may have become a lesbian idol, but at least *Xena* is wittier than *Ellen* and (much) more attractive than Alice B. Toklas. With episode titles like "A Comedy of Eros" and a supporting cast that could pass muster on *Baywatch*, *Xena* doesn't seem to be a program that takes itself too seriously. Yes, yes, there's a message, but we can get over that. The show is fun, with plenty of pretty girls to bring in those vilified, but necessary, male viewers. Even as the Decade of Irony draws to a close, irony is, at least on the surface, the name of *Xena*'s game. The characters speak in a sub-*Melrose* patois, interspersed with wisecracks and snatches of dialogue that could be pasted whole into one of those old movies about the Argonauts, Samson, or Richard the Lionhearted.

But sadly, for all the ironic overlay, the Nineties have really been a rather earnest and didactic little era. Women, we are told, need role models to help them overcome the everyday oppression of a brutish patriarchal society. Turning, as always, to the distinguished journal called *HUES* ("Hear Us Emerging Sisters"), we learn that women "should take the lead from [their] silver screen and TV sisters, and learn to physically defend [themselves], to become women of action rather than passive victims." And what better example than Xena? We should not be surprised that those who propagate one fantasy, that of male oppres-

Mr. Stuttaford is a writer based in New York.

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sion, have turned to another for inspiration.

Well, in Hollywood, when it comes to the pieties of the age, a certain hushed and opportunistic respect is in the end always the rule. Irony has its limits. So Studios USA, *Xena*'s distributor, claims that the show has become "the preeminent symbol of female empowerment." Meanwhile, in an interview, Miss Lawless solemnly intones that she gets a "lot of letters from women who tell [her] that, after watching *Xena*, they have bought the Harley-Davidson they always wanted or left an abusive relationship."

Oh, yi yi yi. **NR**

■ FILM ■

Of Witches and Muses

JOHN SIMON

WHY are people so benighted as to think *The Blair Witch Project* a terrific movie? Is it because it was made by five young kids? Because it cost only $35,000? Because it was a hit at the Sundance Festival (the worst possible reason)? Because they find it truly scary? For that, it would have to be, on some level, plausible; have characters that are, in some way, appealing. I find neither to be the case. Or because it is being sold with a monstrously effective hype? Now that is scary.

An opening title card announces that three young filmmakers vanished into a Maryland forest, where they had gone in search of a reputed witch. A year later, this film shot by them was found, and tells their story. The very first absurdity is that, as the two young men and one young woman each had a video camera, the film would really have to be three films. Edited into one, it predicates the work of editors, undercutting its documentary authenticity.

Next, these Maryland woods seem neither thick nor extensive enough to warrant such a disappearance. The young people, moreover, have only one map, which they read with difficulty, and which one of them, for no good reason, throws away. They also have only one compass, which they don't resort to till late in the game. When they come across a stream, they do not have brains enough to follow it; it would surely lead them to human habitations. Further, they keep

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Why are people so benighted as to think *The Blair Witch Project* is a terrific movie?

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fighting among themselves, which, under the circumstances, is imbecile. And finally, they keep shooting their film with their cumbersome equipment instead of jettisoning it and facilitating their escape.

The strength of the film supposedly resides in the invisibility of the enemy; the witch, or just some locals having fun with the trio. Only disturbing nocturnal sounds are heard, and disquieting manikins made of twigs hang in the trees near the campsites in the morning. That may, perhaps, be scarier than actual sightings, but when certain key things are shot so we can't quite make them out even up close, that is cheating.

What is imposing is the extensive and manifold hype the movie is getting. The press, TV, the Internet are full of it. I just read in the *New York Times* that "the voodoo doll-like stick figures . . . were based on an ancient runic figure called the Burning Man [plagiarized from a 1973 film, *The Wicker Man*] . . . [and] are drawing as much as $300 on the Internet." That is a bit steep; but if someone could inform me where I could get them for, say, $250, I would gladly order a dozen.

■ Albert Brooks—filmmaker and actor—began as a funny guy. But that was long ago, and his later films, co-written with Monica Johnson, were progressively less funny, despite some nice bits. There are few of these in his latest, ***The Muse***, and those mostly in the first half. The movie begins with the screenwriter Steven Phillips (Brooks) winning a humanitarian award in some smallish hotel banquet room—but are there such awards outside the Oscars? Anyway, he

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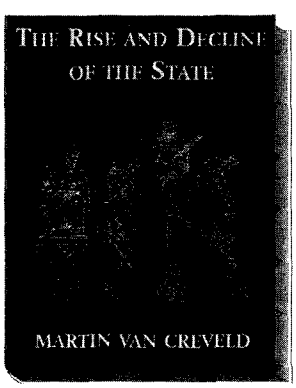

The Rise and Decline of the State

Martin van Creveld

The state, which since the middle of the seventeenth century has been the most important of all modern institutions, is in decline. From Western Europe to Africa, many existing states are either combining into larger communities or falling apart. Many of their functions are likely to be taken over by a variety of organizations that, whatever their precise nature, are not states. In this unique volume Martin van Creveld traces the story of the state from its beginnings to its end. Starting with the simplest political organizations that ever existed, he guides the reader through the origins of the state, its development, its apotheosis during the two World Wars, and its spread from its original home in Western Europe to cover the globe. In doing so, he provides a fascinating history of government from its origins to the present day.

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concludes his acceptance speech with, "I feel like the king of this room," which is, of course, a dig at James Cameron's "King of the World" gloat at the Oscars.

Most moviegoers should get that one, but there are in-jokes that may prove too esoteric for the mass market, which Brooks is, to his disadvantage, wooing nowadays. When a junior studio executive turns down Steven's latest for "loss of creative edge," the worried fellow seeks out a super-successful colleague at his Bel Air estate. The guy (Jeff Bridges) tells him about the Hollywood Muse, Sarah, who has been inspiring him and many other successful scenarists, and who might just take on another client.

The Muse actually claims Zeus as her father, though she also mentions parents retired to Florida. She requires gifts, which turn out to be mighty expensive: a fancy suite at the Four Seasons, a limo and driver, whatever food she craves at whatever hour, and Steven to be reachable by phone day and night to do her bidding, which does not go over big with him or his wife, Laura (Andie MacDowell). Well, if there can be a Blair witch, why not a Muse? But are Muses so greedy and demanding? How much did Homer pay Calliope? And who is the Muse of screenwriting? I don't recall a Sarah among the nine.

And if Sarah has all these celebrated filmmakers as her clients (cameo roles for three of them playing themselves), why does Steven have to foot *all* her bills? And why does this Muse have to change residences all the time? Aren't Helicon and Parnassus good enough? Worst of all, the movie eventually proposes a different provenance for Sarah, which totally contradicts Musedom, then pulls a second switcheroo that belies the first. What has become of method in Hollywood madness?

Albert Brooks is still funny as an actor, Sharon Stone is still sexy as Sarah (though a Muse should know that *groceries* is not pronounced *grosheries* except by ignoramuses), and Andie MacDowell is still, alas, Andie MacDowell. Jeff Bridges is wasted on a puny role, and the guest appearances by celebrities (some of them rather dubious ones like Lorenzo Lamas and Jennifer Tilly) prove of diminishing interest. Mark Feuerstein as the obnoxious studio executive and Bradley Whitford as Steven's maddening agent do their amusing bits expertly, but as a fictional cousin of Steven Spielberg, Steven Wright is unfunny in an unfunny part. This may in fact be Albert Brooks's least funny movie, perhaps because it is the first to be inspired by Sarah.

■ If you want to see how funny a movie can get, catch ***The Dinner Game,*** as *Le Dîner de cons (The Dinner of Jerks)* has been unsatisfactorily Englished. Written and directed by Francis Veber of *La Cage aux folles* fame, this concerns a weekly dinner given by pranksters, to which each guest must bring along a jerk dumb enough not even to know when he is mocked. At the bit of a dinner we see, an expert in boomerangs who gets himself knocked out by them has the others laughing inwardly as he delivers a paean to the boomerang.

The publisher Brochant intends to squire Pignon, a low-level clerk at the Ministry of Finance who reproduces famous monuments with matchsticks and will regale you with the exact number of matches and tubes of glue it takes to build them. Brochant has invited Pignon to a pre-dinner drink at his apartment, but having just wrenched his back, can't go. Pignon stays on to be helpful, especially after a phone message from Christine Brochant announces that she is leaving her husband. Pignon's wife left with a friend of his two years ago, which makes Pignon especially sympathetic.

But beware of Pignon's helpfulness! Whatever he tries to do for Brochant lands the publisher in a worse mess, from little clumsinesses to catastrophic whoppers. When Brochant's mistress is to be gotten rid of, it is Pignon who opens the door. Not knowing that the woman he sees is not the mistress at all, but Christine, who has changed her mind, he tells her to be temporarily satisfied with the usual four to five visits a week. No wonder she departs with even firmer resolve this time.

It is hard to convey the humor of farce out of context and in cold print. What matters most is that Jacques Villeret, as Pignon, Thierry Lhermitte as Brochant, and Francis Huster as a friend all have split-second timing and knockout facial expressions. Best of all may be Daniel Prévost, as a smug tax collector named Cheval, who horses around with exquisite dignity. See it! **NR**

■ **ARCHITECTURE** ■

Avenue of Victory

JEFFREY HART

NEW YORK CITY is a focus of nations and races, comparable in power and interest to ancient Babylon, Alexandria, Rome, or 19th-century London or Paris. Daily life here is so hurried, so full of impressions and sensations, that we are likely to become insulated against them. To live fully in such a place, to "live where we stand," as F. R. Leavis once put it, it is necessary to listen to the music of its stones, that is, of its architecture. So let us observe for a moment Manhattan's Fifth Avenue,

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To those who pay attention, the stones of Fifth Avenue have voices.

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which arose in its modern form out of the enormous wealth that flowed into New York during the period after the Civil War—wealth in the form of iron, coal, oil, real estate, railroads, and finance—and proclaims with beauty and pride New York's standing as a world-historical city. To those who pay attention, the stones of this great avenue have voices. What do they say?

Consider that question from the perspective of General William Tecumseh Sherman—or rather from the perspective of Augustus Saint-Gaudens's equestrian statue of Sherman at the corner of Fifth and 59th Street, which dominates Grand Army Plaza. This is one of the most beautiful architectural spaces in the world. Sherman sits astride his charger. If he looked to his right, the General would see the Plaza Hotel (1907), famous for its French Renaissance elegance. Over his left shoulder, he would see the Metropolitan Club (1894). An Italianate palace, inspired by the Farnese residence in Parma, with its

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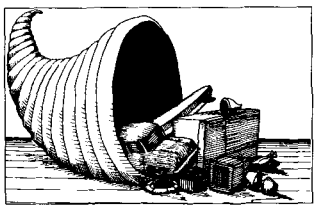
courtyard screened by Doric columns, this is the most luxurious club building in New York and one of the architect Stanford White's most stunning designs.

North of the Plaza lies Central Park, which was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. The park is absolutely indispensable to New York, and there is a historical connection between Sherman and the two visionary artists who created it. Before the Civil War, Olmsted toured the South and in his book *The Cotton Kingdom* depicted poverty, illiteracy, sloth, sullen slaves, lack of enterprise, dearth of intellectual and artistic culture. The book was influential in shaping northern opinion in favor of a civil war. Thus General Sherman appropriately rides south, as if out of Olmsted's park.



If he could uproot himself and proceed down the avenue, Sherman would first notice the Pulitzer Fountain, just in front of the Plaza, named for the eccentric publisher of the *New York World*. Diving into that fountain, Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald defied Prohibition and gave full-immersion baptism to the Jazz Age. Further on Sherman would encounter Bergdorf's, Tiffany's, Saks, the art deco Rockefeller Center, St. Thomas Episcopal Church (with its famous children's choir), St. Patrick's Cathedral (an assertion of social defiance by the rising New York Irish community), and the Empire State Building. Arriving in Madison Square Park, north of 23rd Street, Sherman would view Saint-Gaudens's stern statue of Admiral David Farragut, the victor of Mobile Bay, who looks to be an indomitable Scots Calvinist: "Damn the torpedoes [mines]—full speed ahead!" The elaborate pedestal beneath Farragut employs ocean themes and was also designed by Stanford White. It includes a stone crab upon whose back you see carved "S. White." Admiral Farragut's tough seaman's visage persuades the viewer, at least for the moment, that the Confederacy never had a chance.

At the southern end of Fifth Avenue, about three miles from the Sherman Memorial, stands Washington Square Arch, a symbol of an earlier victory, that of the Revolution. A Roman triumphal arch—this too designed by White—it permanently replaced a temporary arch commemorating Washington's 1789 inauguration in New York.

It is not difficult to read the meaning of these memorials. To put it crudely, they proclaim: "We won the Civil War." Return to Sherman at Grand Army Plaza. Besides the Sherman statue itself, Saint-Gaudens designed the winged goddess of victory, Nike, who leads Sherman's charger. She holds the palm of victory, her eyes pitilessly blank, her expression like that of a Greek Fury. As his model for her, Saint-Gaudens used his mistress, Davida Clark, though probably not for the pitiless gaze. The pedestal supporting the Sherman statue, deliberately unobtrusive, was designed by White. Notably, pine cones and fronds beneath the horse's hooves represent Georgia, which Sherman had destroyed in his terrible scorched-earth march. Saint-Gaudens had Nike's eyes blank, her visage terrifying, because he understood, with Homer, the true nature of war for those who fight it.

East and west from Fifth Avenue, the spine of Manhattan island, stand innumerable other trophies of the Civil War and the money that flowed from it. The Metropolitan Club was founded when a business colleague of J. P. Morgan's was blackballed because of bad manners at the Union Club, over on Park Avenue, then the most socially distinguished club in New York, named (obviously) in honor of the Union victory. Furious, Morgan commissioned White to build an even grander club that Morgan's associate could join: the Metropolitan. Down on Park Avenue we have the Union League Club. Though not explicitly connected with the war, other buildings of the *belle époque* likewise participate in this architectural epic, notably the great clubs of Midtown: the Century (White), Players (White), Racquet and Tennis (McKim), Harvard (McKim), the New York Yacht Club (Warren and Wetmore), Yale (Rogers), and University (McKim). One purpose of the clubs was to reward with membership those men of recent, war-generated wealth who had managed to learn civilized manners. Unlike other distinguished cities such as Boston and

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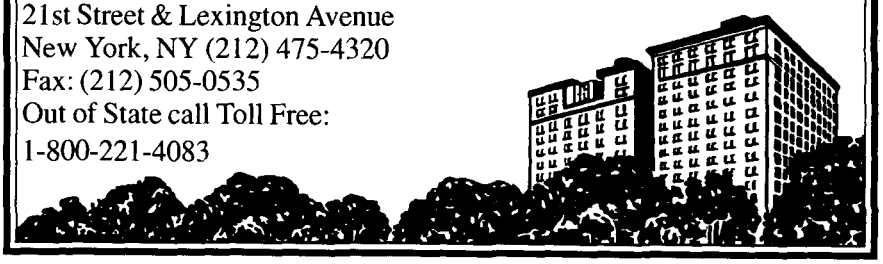

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Philadelphia, which tended to social exclusiveness, New York was much more open to men of various backgrounds and welcomed entrepreneurship.

Thus all of the major architecture and sculpture of the post-war period reminds us who won the Civil War. But not only that. They emphatically declare that there will never be another one. Nor were the men who designed and built these monuments to be proved wrong. The North held the Union together, defeated treason, put the United States on the road to world preeminence, and guaranteed the future of this great imperial city. **NR**

■ CITY DESK ■

Breast Hors d'Œuvres

RICHARD BROOKHISER

THE unusually hot summer has disturbed animal populations throughout New York. Upstate, bears leave their mountain homes to forage for berries that have not withered, and mosquito eggs laid in dried-up puddles and ponds do not hatch. In the city, foraging and reproducing men and women bare even more of themselves than usual. What do we see as a result?

Breast hors d'œuvres. The breast hors d'œuvre is the female bosom, supported and exposed, like little mounds of goat cheese and black bread on a waiter's tray. "Take one!" the look says, sincerely, though you are expected to go through preliminaries, and the hors d'œuvre has right of refusal. Where youth and muscle tone cannot achieve the desired effect (that is to say, 90 percent of the time), lycra is called in for assistance. If Forties cigarette girls had carried their trays a few inches higher, and if the trays had been part of their torsos, they would have had the look exactly.

What you see is close communion. What kind? Neither a lover's embrace nor the marriage of true minds, but the fusion of form and fabric. Joggers, and women on their way to and from workouts, are typically dipped in spandex, though this is unattractive material, which makes them look as if they have escaped from an aquarium. More arresting are the natural fibers, silk or cotton, seemingly applied with a painter's brush. This summer women have surrendered a millennia-old weapon in fashion's arsenal: deceit. In these outfits they have nowhere to hide, and nothing to hide behind.

The great bake-off is not all pleasant, for it also gives us aging narcissists. What looks fresh at 20 looks less so at 45 or 60. But even when the sun-tanned skin starts to resemble burned scrambled eggs, or the back of a toad, it still gets displayed. Worse even than the failures of preservation are the successes—the thighs that are the same size they were in the Kennedy era; the flesh furrows that, in defiance of the season, have not been plowed. These victories take as much effort as Cold War containment—and to less purpose, for Communism, unlike time, could ultimately be beaten.

Then there are the young narcissists. Twenty-year-old exhibitionists, though, are no more appealing. The only thing worse than a man showing off his washboard abs anywhere but the beach is a man showing them off while rollerblading. Going shirtless, and in-line skating, are almost sure signs of psychopathy. When they appear together, the diagnosis is certain. Add a headset, and the narcissist is in Narcissist Heaven—observed by everybody, aware of no one.

All in all, I am of two minds about the summer flowering that covers the city's sidewalks in July and August. Mindful of the American imperium, and the world's resentment, the patriot in me defends these displays of flesh. Why should a great American city heed the fashion sense of Osama bin Laden? Besides, the ultramodest of the world, who profess to be shocked at our mores, are hypocrites: The lands of the veil are the lands of lust, harems, child brides, and, here and there, slaves (who perform more services than floor-scrubbing). People who worry about the deranging effect of a strand of a woman's hair worry too much. American brazenness, by contrast, can be a sign of indifference.

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Going shirtless, and in-line skating, are almost sure signs of psychopathy.

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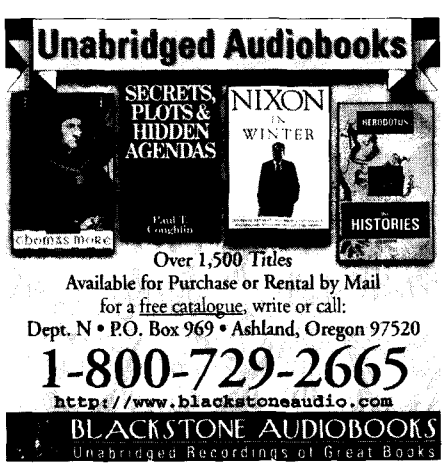
But, but. When the sexual switch goes to the ON position, there is quite a power surge. It jolts me most at the neighborhood high school, named for Washington Irving. A bust of the author sits on a pillar outside the main entrance, watching the scene, as I do. The girls taking summer sessions, almost all black and Puerto Rican, come out with their colors (teak to walnut) flying. They pour themselves on their slouching swains, who wear reversed caps and pouts. One afternoon, a young lady, lolling on a stoop, even called to an old white man, "Wanna lay me on my back, sweet boy?" With offers like that, how can any boy be sweet?

The other day I was having lunch in a Brazilian restaurant on Union Square. One of the waitresses this summer happens to be the daughter of a colleague of my wife's. I have known this girl since she was a fetus. This fall she is going to art school in California, and she has blue toenails. As I rose to leave, she was bending to take an order from the next table, and I found myself face to face with the gap between her waistline and blouse. It did not expose her cheeks, but it showed a lot more than her back. It was a little encounter of Summer '99. Nice to meet you. When you turn around, and I get out of here, we will behave as if this never happened. **NR**



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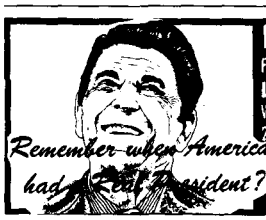

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Lane Kirkland, R.I.P.

NEW YORK, AUGUST 20

LANE KIRKLAND'S death was met with cautious respect by establishment liberals. He was, by the standards of many of them, less than a heroic union leader. He sinned greatly when he enthusiastically endorsed George Meany's decision to sit out the election of 1972. As warden of the AFL-CIO, George Meany had found the foreign-policy recommendations of George McGovern intolerable, and Lane Kirkland, his deputy who succeeded him seven years later, firmly agreed. And then Lane Kirkland had endorsed the war in Vietnam, a sin not easily forgiven by the accommodationists.

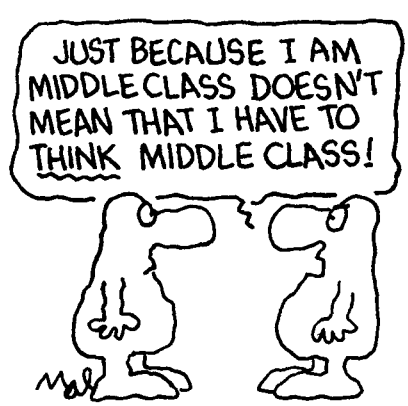
The incandescent moment for Lane Kirkland and his unions came when Lech Walesa, the Polish electrician, organized a strike in Gdansk. Proletarians were not supposed to assert themselves, under Communist practice. What Walesa greatly needed was support of every kind from the West. He needed support from intellectuals, and got it through the Committee on the Present Danger, which Kirkland joined. Beginning with Meany, there were ties (some of them illegal) between the CIA and the free labor-union movement in Europe, stoked by Irving Brown and Jay Lovestone. Lane Kirkland devoted critical years during his leadership to countering Communist efforts to subordinate labor unions in Italy, France, Great Britain, and India, to the purposes of Communist aggrandizement.

Gently mannered, Lane Kirkland could speak tough words. He was born to impoverished southern aristocracy, in Camden, South Carolina. He went to the Merchant Marine Academy and then on to graduate work at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service. From there to a succession of staff jobs with the AFL-CIO. When he was elevated to the presidency, 24 percent of America's working population was unionized. When he was deposed, it was 15.5 percent. After four years of left-disciplined leadership of the AFL-CIO, union membership was down to 13.9 percent, but the leadership calls for continued militancy and seems always in search of class-warfare formulations.

Our friendship generated from a common commitment to the anti-Communist cause. That much we took for granted in our occasional encounters. But there was more. He liked to speak about Camden, his home town, where my own parents lived and are buried. In the inflected voice of the gentle Southerner he would remind me that my parents lived in the house built for his great-grandmother. We were the joint commencement speakers at the University of South Carolina in 1985. Mr. Kirkland wrote his own prose and he spoke engagingly of progress at home (we had emerged from the 1981–82 recession), and progress abroad (Reagan had announced the doctrine that called for helping to resist Soviet aggressions, as in Afghanistan). As was expected by the hosts, he loosed a wisecrack or two in my direction as a reactionary and, in the Southern tradition, I reciprocated.

He didn't know it, but I had paid my respects behind the scenes two years earlier. In 1976, the AFL-CIO came out for Jimmy Carter for president. Four years later, Kirkland endorsed Carter's reelection, opposing Ronald Reagan. In that campaign, Kirkland used some tough language to criticize Reagan, notwithstanding that the Republican contender was a paid-up lifetime member of an AFL-CIO union. In 1983 I had a telephone call from the deeply distressed Chairman of the Board for International Broadcasting. Frank Shakespeare told me that the White House had vetoed the nomination of Lane Kirkland to serve as a director of the supremely important board that presided over the work of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. The idea of slighting Lane Kirkland, let alone losing the AFL-CIO's support for the board's activity was intolerable. Would I intercede? I did, and Kirkland joined the board, giving the operation his massive support.

Lane Kirkland faced an insurrection in 1995. He was thought an "insider"—the labor-union term for leaders whose work time concentrates on the office rather than the hustings. Kirkland had attended to his duties as chief labor-union spokesman, railing against Reagan's handling of the air traffic controllers' strike in 1981, and against Clinton's call to ratify the North American Free Trade Agreement. The decline in labor-union enrollment was an aspect of industrial development, not of inattention to duty by the leadership. His resignation was effected in the summer of that year by a union technician who had no apparent interest in Kirkland's contributions to free labor in the world. Mr. Sweeney would find this out in the four post-Kirkland years, when union enrollment continued to decline.



I hadn't seen him for almost a year. I greeted him then as I always did. "How's socialism, Lane?" "Good," he'd answer. "How's Wall Street?"

Good, as a matter of fact.

Elections, Day After Tomorrow

NEW YORK, JULY 16

PERHAPS because of the seeming eternity of Mr. Clinton's reign, interest in his successor focuses narrowly, whence the Bush, McCain, Forbes, Buchanan, Alexander business. Still, every now and again one hears the question asked, "Is there anybody out there on the horizon who is interesting for the day after tomorrow?"

That would mean, let's say, the election of 2008. That assumes eight years of the GOP; or any of the other variables, including four years GOP, four years Democratic, or even eight years of Gore.

Attention is attracted (in the case of this observer) to Bret Schundler. He is the mayor of Jersey City. Jersey City lies just across the river from Manhattan. It is to New York City what East St. Louis is to St. Louis. Or rather, that is how it looked when ten years ago Bret Schundler was elected mayor.

He is a young man (40) whose beginning in politics was a fascination with the cause of Sen. Gary Hart, then contending for the presidency. What Schundler decided, after close observation of the politics of the '80s, was that the effects intended by the

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Democratic contenders weren't being realized. His insight is interesting and plausible. It is that ideologically motivated politicians tend to get their satisfaction from the enactment of congenial legislation, and from the money spent on idealistic purposes; but not, really, from the results achieved. That is pretty plain viewing to many observers, who recall that the war on poverty was formally launched about two trillion dollars ago without any apparent effect on poverty. So that the satisfaction got by those who enacted the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson was less in alleviating poverty than in adopting measures designed to alleviate poverty.

Bret Schundler left home in New Jersey and did college work at Haifa University in Israel, then on to Harvard, from which he got his degree. Sometime after his adventure with Sen. Hart, he went to Wall Street and succeeded. He looked for an opportunity to try out his new political visions and lo! the Democratic mayor of Jersey City was carted off to jail, leaving a vacancy. Against the advice of all the pros, Schundler submitted his name and committed his personal resources to the campaign.

Jersey City had last seen a Republican mayor during World War I. It is a city with a preponderant ethnic and racial minority vote. Over 30 percent are black, about 30 Hispanic, about 10 Asian. Schundler won with the extraordinary majority of 69 percent. The figure is emblematically interesting, given that George W. Bush became an overnight presidential favorite after winning 69 percent of the vote in Texas, with a considerably smaller minority vote (about 43 percent) than Jersey City.

How on earth does a conservative Republican get over two-thirds of the vote in a city two-thirds minority? Schundler is too modest to say that this is a tribute to his own skills. He uses the old refrain, coined two generations ago by Harry Truman: He talked sense to the people.

Schundler is lyrical in his argumentation. On the matter of schools, he declines to be diverted by ideological arguments or fanatical interpretations of the First Amendment. What he says is simply that nobody is going to stand in the way of parents who desire to improve the education of their children. What about the leaders—one gives Rep. Charles Rangel as an example—who are prominent black politicians and tough opponents of any government money going to private or parochial schools? His answer: The disputes are largely terminological. Money could go directly to the student, as in the GI bill. Or it can be given as a tax credit to the parents. The opposition will crumble, up against genuine prospects for improved education. The backing of Charles Rangel dissipates up against proved advantages to the children of his constituents.

What is especially refreshing about Schundler is his confidence in his own approach. Those who are battle-weary over decades of arguments about vouchers and taxes and welfare overloads are arrested by the directness of his approach. But how to discourage somebody elected and then reelected by majorities hardly seen since the Bolsheviks stopped reelecting themselves all but unanimously?

Schundler reminds seasoned observers of the usefulness of pretty basic observations, such as that parents want the best for their children. Look for him in 2008.

The Sickly Side of Health Plans

NEW YORK, JULY 13

If the principals in the health-care/tax-reduction/surplus-disposal arguments are intending to confound the citizenry, they are greatly succeeding. So, the time comes for the fundamentalists to unearth, again, the relevant considerations.

1. There is no such thing as free health care. As defined before in this space, free health care is health care somebody else pays for. It can be thought "free" only by the running hypnoses of modern life. If John, age 60, has to have an operation the going cost of which is $10,000 and he pays $2,000, and the insurance outfit the balance, he thinks he has gotten an operation substantially free of charge.

That is delusory except in situations that can be compared to picking the winner in a horse race. The cost of John's operation is free if he took out health insurance on Monday, got sick on Tuesday, was operated on on Wednesday, and canceled his insurance on Thursday. Otherwise, he is simply cashing in on premiums he has been paying through whatever instrumentality—health insurance via his employers, via state or federal governments, or individually, as with Blue Cross.

If John—and every other American—led robotic lives doing exactly the same thing, paying the same premiums, enduring the same afflictions, then under the great calculus in the sky, John's operation would be exactly paid for by John's contributions. But of course life does not work that way. The whole idea of insurance isn't to let John go through life paying less than his probable afflictions will cost him. It is rather to protect him from a sudden major cost. They call that catastrophic coverage.

2. A well-ordered society would focus on catastrophic medical expenses, though probably the word should be toned down towards "unusual" or "distressing" illnesses. The invocation of the state is reasonable where the expense of insurance is unbearable to the individual.

Suppose that medical expenses were deemed distressing if they cost more than 5 percent of family income. The family earns $40,000. Health expenses up to $2,000 per year are paid for by John's family. After that point, insurance kicks in.

3. The quarrel in Congress is on two points. Suppose the insurer (read HMO) tells John he doesn't really need the operation, but he thinks he does, and so does Cousin Matilda, who was once married to a doctor and is confident of her powers to diagnose. Who decides? Again: Suppose that the insurer's delay causes grievous health damage. Who sues whom? Again, is John entitled simply to the money needed to set him back in good health? Or is he also entitled to punitive damages that might be leveled against the insurer?

4. As was readily predictable, people who think themselves beneficiaries of free health care have expanded their concern for more and more of what is ostensibly free. The great health innovations of the past 25 years had been the work of the drug industry. Health costs are more and more identified as the cost of the pills one takes to keep alive and frisky. Why shouldn't they be "free" also?

The contest between the two major parties goes on at the usual levels. Since drugs cost money, money has to be found to pay for them. Comes the divide, Democratic–Republican. The Democrats want comprehensive coverage. Small businesses send up alarm flares—many would go broke if they had to pay the extra costs of insurance. The Republicans say: Let individual states decide what extra insurance should be paid; the Dems want Uncle Sam to take on the whole load because a) he is a nice guy, and b) he is teeming with extra cash.

The Republican strategy is to fire away at the Democrats by exposing in the public square the original version of their patients' rights bill, which would have raised health costs by 6 percent. The Democrats fire back that it is a far, far better thing to help John pay for his diabetes pills than to "give" more money to the rich. The fight goes on and it's not only the rich who are being beat up, it's the drug industry. They've come up with a drug that kills little people; maybe they should come up with a drug that kills old people?

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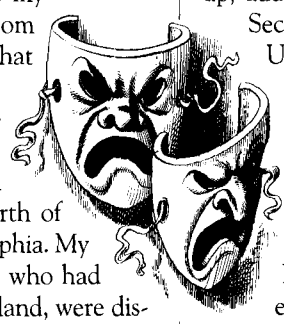
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

THE time has come to write about something I have never written about before. I've kept silent for three reasons: The story did not fit my usual themes, it had no point when standing alone, and I could not include it in my memoir without arbitrarily switching locales and introducing too many characters with no continuous function.

Now, thanks to Hillary Clinton, my themes have expanded, my story has a point, and switching locales is the latest thing, so I will announce my candidacy for senator from New York and tell you what happened in Watertown.



It all started in 1944 when my mother's foster sister married a man from a little town 18 miles north of Watertown called Philadelphia. My mother and grandmother, who had never been north of Maryland, were dismayed, but I, who had never been north of Maryland either, was fascinated.

As the family letter-writer I scrupulously marked the envelopes "Philadelphia, New York STATE," underlining "state" three times so it wouldn't go to Pennsylvania. From my aunt's letters I learned the phrase "upstate New York" and latched on to it obsessively in my weird-kid way. Being a map freak as well, I sent away to Esso for a free road map, telling them that I wanted a map of "UPSTATE New York." When the map of the entire state came I carried it everywhere and read it until the folds split, becoming an expert on UPSTATE New York by the time we spent our first vacation there in the summer of 1946.

We took the train. Granny didn't go, which was just as well. We had to change trains in Manhattan so we stopped for lunch at the Automat. We were on our way in when my mother and I skidded to a stop and peered through the window in disbelief at something neither of us had ever seen before: an integrated restaurant.

"Look at them," Mama marveled. "Just sitting there, big as life."

Miss King can be reached at P. O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, Va. 22404.

My father, who had lived up North, hustled us in, but we almost missed our connection at Grand Central from stopping and peering in every other restaurant along the way.

("Miss King, what is your first memory of New York?")

The train to Utica passed Yankee Stadium, which thrilled my tomboy mother, and FDR's Hyde Park mansion, which thrilled us all. It sat on a bluff high above the tracks so that we had to look up, adding to the religious awe we felt.

Secular reality returned when we saw Utica.

"What a dump," said Mama. "It looks like it's full of those run-down hotels where bums eat sardines out of the can and keep milk on the windowsill."

("Welcome to Utica, Miss King. Instead of a press conference, our local media have prepared a word-association test.")

The train from Utica to Watertown was a local that got us in after midnight, two hours late. My aunt and her husband met us and drove us to "Philly," as they called it, but I remember nothing except being carried upstairs to bed clutching my cracked New York map.

The next morning we awoke to a perfect movie set of a small town, with a Main Street, a grammar school, a white frame church, big square saltbox houses with barns instead of garages, and a town bad girl whom my aunt's mother-in-law pointed out first thing.

The second thing she pointed out was her hatred of FDR. We couldn't believe it, I least of all since I had known no other president until the previous year. It wasn't just that she was a Republican; what really bothered her, she said, was that "He brought back liquor." That made two more shocks: I had never met a Republican, and I had grown up hearing Southerners say, "At least he brought back liquor." My life was opening up, but unlike Hillary's, it was opening up in New York.

My aunt's husband had to hide his stash of Genessee Cream Ale from his mother. At first she approved of me because I was "such a quiet little thing," but then my life opened up some more. I had tasted my father's beer at home and hated it, but Genessee Cream Ale was so ambrosial that I drank two bottles and sang "I'm Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover." Hillary, baby, give up: I got plastered at age 10 in upstate New York on upstate brew.

We borrowed a car and went exploring: Alexandria Bay, where we toured Boldt's Castle, other little towns in the area—Theresa, Antwerp, Gouverneur, Evans Mills—and Watertown, where we marveled over the beauty and stability of the residential streets with their huge McKinley-Queen Anne houses and towering shade trees. All three of us loved it and wanted to move there.

Mama caused episodes coming and going when we went to Canada. As native-born Americans she and I had no trouble entering, but when my father could not produce his naturalization papers the border guard grew officious.

"Listen," Mama piped up. "He ought to get in quicker than anybody. He's English and England owns youall."

My father's old passport was finally accepted but we had to listen to a rote recital of Canadian history before we were passed through.

On our return trip Mama was determined not to pay duty on my "real Canadian sweater" so as we neared the border, she made me put it on even though it was July.

"A little warm for a sweater, isn't it, young lady?" asked the guard.

"She's got malaria," said Mama.

When we were safely across she glared in the rearview mirror. "I'm not setting foot in that country again. They can take their maple leaf and shove it!"

("Miss King, what is your opinion of NAFTA?")

Her finest hour came when she got out of a speeding ticket by telling the New York state trooper about her childhood sweetheart, George McQuinn. They were born a week apart in Ballston, Virginia, and went to school together. George played first base for the old St. Louis Browns, when he made the final catch in the 1944 World Series, and was afterwards signed by the Yankees. NR

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